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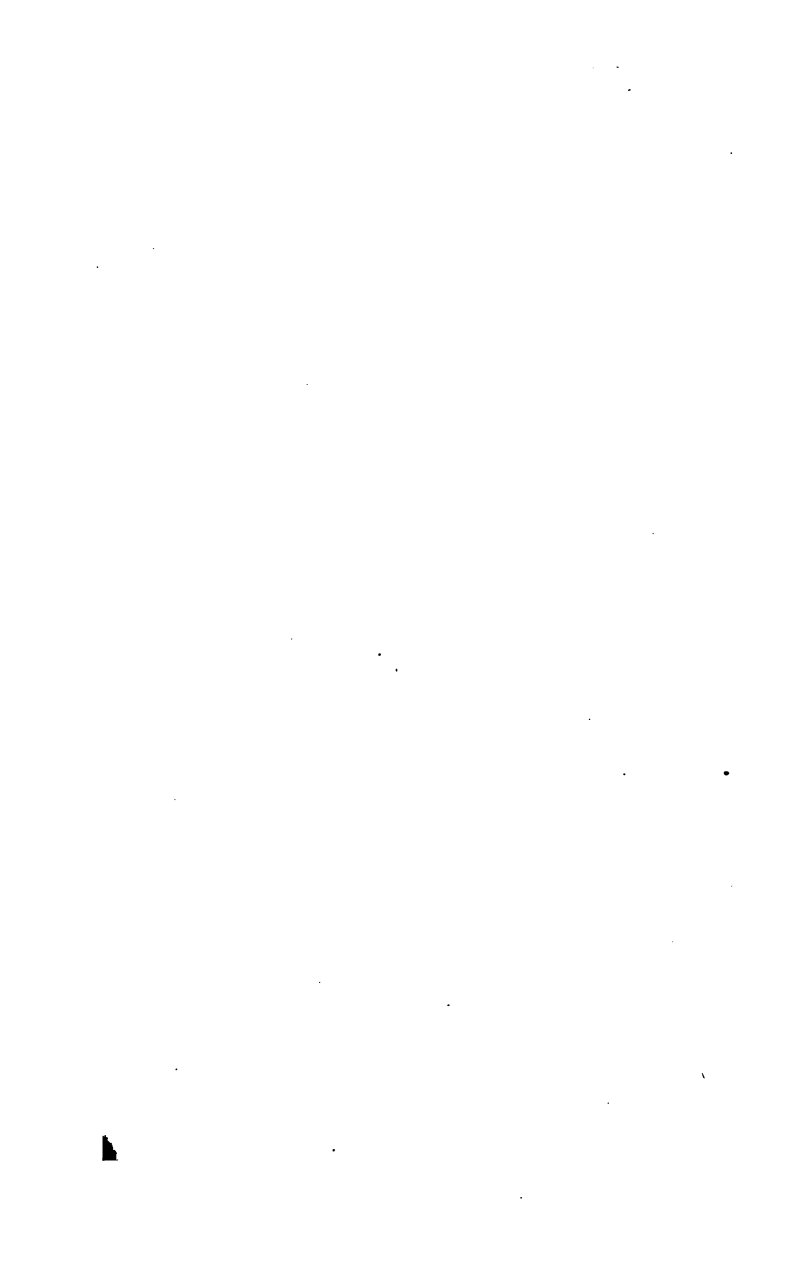


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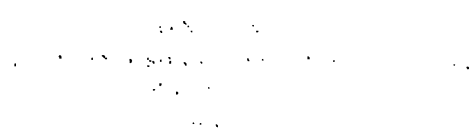




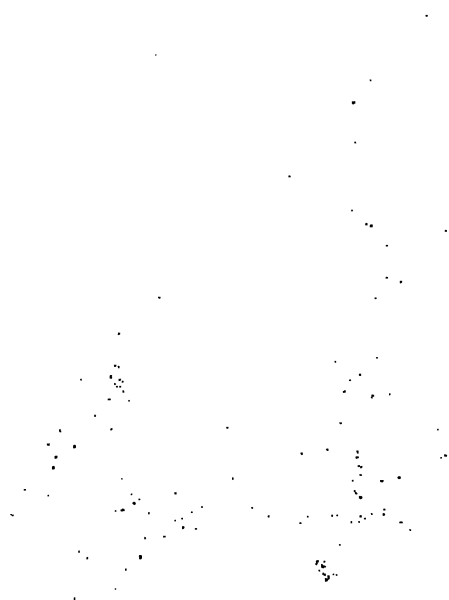




A RAMBLE WITH THE LITTLE ONES.



250. m. 368.





INTEGRITY:

A Tale.

By MRS. HOFLAND.



LONDON:

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1868.

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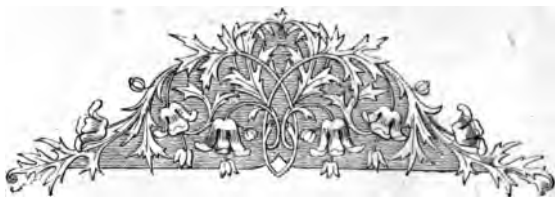


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INTEGRITY.

I.

Brothers—Yet Unlike.

WHAT could you have been saying, my dear mamma, to Frederick Tracy last night? The tears were in his eyes, yet he looked happy, and even proud, when I entered, but as Mrs. Greville came in with me I could not inquire the cause."

Such was the question of Emily Shelburne, then a girl in her fourteenth year, to her widowed mother, who immediately replied,—

"I had been speaking of your father, my love,—had been relating a material circumstance in his early life, which awakened the glow of kindred feeling in the warm heart of Frederick, and occasioned the expression of countenance which struck you."

"You often talk to Frederick about my papa," said Emily, with an air of pensive thoughtfulness, which

almost amounted to reproach, and betrayed a little jealousy of her mother's favourite.

I *do*, my dear, for in depicting your dear father's character, I consider myself giving the best lesson (the lesson of example) to an orphan singularly situated, and affording indications not only of the purest sensibility, but the most generous and lofty integrity; as it is delightful to *me* to develop a mind so ingenuous, so it appears a duty I owe *him* in return, to cherish the virtues, and strengthen the principles I approve. I can talk to him with more ease than I can to you, on a subject so near my heart, for the sight of you, my child, recalls so forcibly—"

Mrs. Shelburne suddenly stopped, and Emily as suddenly comprehended all her mother felt, but could not say; ashamed of the sensation she had rather conceived than expressed, she threw herself into her mother's arms, assured her that she was fully aware of the acuteness of her feelings on a point so touching, and proposed changing the current of their thoughts by reading.

"Oh no, my love," replied Mrs. Shelburne, rallying her spirits; "it is to me a sweet employment to speak of your father, although when I address myself to you I too frequently suffer the subject to move me too much; we must both learn to conquer our feelings, Emily, even on this point. Now for my anecdote, which it is perfectly right you should hear, as it is in fact a portion of family history.

"Your father's uncle, Mr. Robert Shelburne, never married; he improved his paternal fortune much by a





concern in the copper mines, which enabled him to purchase an estate in Dorsetshire, where he resided with an unmarried sister. Mr. Shelburne, when a schoolboy, passed his holidays at their house, and was considered by all the relations of the family as the future heir. When he became about fifteen he took with him, on these occasions, a half-brother who was a sickly child, and who, having lost both his parents, needed the motherly offices and pure air likely to be met with in his uncle's house. The child was first tolerated, then liked, and eventually became a permanent resident, as Mrs. Judith observed 'that puny children were at least quiet, and as her brother was often ailing she might as well nurse two as one;' unhappily her good nursing confirmed the delicacy which would otherwise have been temporary.

"Francis (your beloved father), when in his twenty-first year, was sent for by express to his uncle, who was said to be extremely ill. He entered the bedroom of a relative he loved tenderly, at a moment when it presented a spectacle most afflictive and appalling to a heart like his. The dying invalid was raised in his bed, his sister had placed a pen in his nerveless hand, with which she eagerly besought him to sign his will, which was laid on the bed before him. An attorney and his clerk stood on one side to witness this act, and on the other appeared the clergyman of the village, who was protesting against the validity of the deed, and observing, 'that as it appeared the will had been made above a year, yet never signed, the testator had his own reasons for his delay.'

"The expiring man was either unequal to the exer-

tion urged upon him, or accorded with the opinion expressed ; he hesitated, his long-loved, first-loved nephew, entered the room, on whom he cast his eyes with an eager but indefinite expression, sunk back and expired.

“ Even in this awful moment your great aunt loudly lamented ‘ that her dear William was wronged, for that the will was wholly in his favour ;’ and the minister rejoiced ‘ that even death had prevented his old friend from an act which he was well aware had been unfairly urged upon him.’ The attorney endeavoured to explain the law in such cases, and how far it was binding ; but your father quelled a disturbance which shocked him, by a solemn assurance, ‘ that in his eyes the will of his uncle was sacred, and, so far as he was concerned, should be fulfilled to the letter.’

“ When he ceased to be a minor this promise was carried into effect ; a trifling legacy was all that came to him, the estate was given to William, the personal property to Mrs. Judith, who was also guardian to the heir, and continued her power to the last day of her existence, when she bequeathed all to the nephew she had enriched and controlled.”

“ Poor papa ! rather noble, generous, excellent papa !” exclaimed Emily.

“ Very true,” my love ; “ his conduct was all that, and as he was then a young and disengaged man he had a right to be generous, but, under other circumstances, an act of simple integrity would have been better.”

“ Surely, dear mother, this was an act of pure integrity ? of a lofty sense of rectitude ?”

"It was so, my dear, in *him*, undoubtedly, at the time, but yet, when it appeared by innumerable testimonies from the clergyman and the servants, that his uncle had been teased into the making of a testament which he kept unsigned, as if he could not in conscience execute it, there certainly was an *equal* reason for believing that he fulfilled the will of his uncle in taking care of himself as in giving all to his brother; and in my opinion common honesty and common sense would have dictated a *division* of the property, but in early life we never compromise. I therefore am not in the least surprised that your father, in the nobleness of his nature and the strictness of his principles, gave *all* in the manner he did."

"But surely his brother offered to divide?"

"Never; so far from that, when your father (who as a merchant suffered immense losses from political changes) applied to him for aid he replied, 'that he could not think of advancing money for risk in these terrible times; but that if his brother would give over business he would willingly allow him an annuity, if it should be found necessary, and he added that—'"

"What could he add?"

"That since we had happily—*happily* lost our little boys,—and my dowry was sufficient for a girl, very little would enable us to live."

"Oh, what a wretch! a wicked, wicked man! to say my little brothers were happily removed."

"It affected *me* then as *you* feel it now, and rendered your father so indignant, as to check all further inter-

course; but I can at *this* time make allowance for the cold temperament of a man whose very words were dictated by one who had gained an ascendancy over him by every claim of gratitude. 'He spoke to me, who never had a child;' and as a stranger to the strongest tie of existence, set lightly by it. From all I can learn he is rather a weak man than a bad one, the energies of his mind partaking the fragile constitution of the mother whom he lost in the first stage of infancy, and whose maladies he inherits.

"Well," said Emily, after a long drawn sigh, "I will try to forgive him; but I don't like him, and I am very glad dear papa could do well without him."

"Had he lived he would have done very well, but as it is we have nothing to regret save his loss. He lived to repair though not to retrieve his fortune, and to establish a character of the highest integrity with numbers who never heard of this early sacrifice; in fact it is so long past, and we have had so little intercourse with the parties concerned in it, that in one sense I had forgotten it myself, till the affairs of Frederick Tracy recalled it to remembrance."





II.

The Clergyman's Pupil.

MRS. SHELBURNE resided at this time at a village near the town of D——, to which, on the death of her deeply-lamented husband, she was attracted, partly because it offered extraordinary facilities for the education of her daughter, combined with the retirement she courted, and partly because it was within an easy distance of an elder and much beloved sister, the only survivor of a once numerous family.

The husband of this sister (Mr. Hastings) was the sole guardian of Emily; he was a merchant in a very extensive line of business, a man much known, and generally respected though not generally liked, for his religious sentiments were those of a rigid sectarian, his manners cold and diffident, and the fears which he ever appeared to feel, were contagious to those around him. Few approached him with ease save those who, as his spiritual directors, felt their own superiority, or those who intreated the charity which they well knew he would accord them on a principle of duty; for although he was

naturally a man of much feeling, yet with him it was a principle to seem as if devoid of any, and ever actuated by higher motives.

Professing in every particular the same faith, and adding to her creed the most implicit obedience to the will of her wedded lord as a religious duty, yet no person could offer a greater contrast in temper and manners to him than his wife. A tender heart, vivid and romantic imagination, the innocent simplicity of a mind which had never been informed nor corrupted by commerce with the world, rendered Mrs. Hastings the most pure and happy of all mystics, the most amiable and interesting of women. She lived in a world of her own, moved in an atmosphere of her own creation, and so reduced the most repellant natures to a partial submission to her ameliorating influence, that all around, as well as all within her, seemed attuned to love. Living entirely in the country, circumscribed in her acquaintance, and divided many hours in the day from her husband, her time was always occupied, either by the labours of benevolence or the abstractions of sublime meditations, which the natural cheerfulness of her disposition, and the sweetness of her temper, aided by the richness of her fancy, rendered the source of edification and amusement to all who afterwards had the pleasure of her conversation. Glowing with enthusiasm, and rapt in devotion, her soul appeared as if it had visited its native paradise, and brought from thence a foretaste of its heirship to immortality.

Nor were the excellences of Mrs. Hastings those

only which belong to a contemplative mind—she had suffered many trials in her family, from the sickness and death of her younger children, especially in the loss of the only daughter she had been blessed with ; and she was even now the unceasing nurse and patient attendant of two extremely aged relatives, to whom she dedicated hours that would have wearied out the patience of any one not influenced by divine forbearance ; and as the mother of three sons now entering on manhood, and by no means agreeing with the opinions and wishes of their father, it will readily be conceived that her trials were not merely nominal. Every day, and every hour, the meekness and the loftiness of those holy principles which ruled her spirit were called into action, and they ever answered to the call.

As no sisters could love each other with more decided tenderness nor with more unbroken confidence than these sisters had ever done, it was thought singular by some of their friends that Mrs. Shelburne did not fix her residence in the positive neighbourhood of Mrs. Hastings ; and the more serious roundly censured the widow for not placing herself and child beneath the protection which circumstances thus offered. This situation had not escaped Mrs. Shelburne's consideration ; but as her view of a Christian's duties did not exactly accord with that of Mr. Hastings, and as she foresaw clearly that the time was advancing when, in despite of the mollifying influence of her sister, the "house would be divided against itself," and that her nephews would claim a constant asylum in her house, it would

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be embarrassing to grant, and painful to refuse, she thought it the part of wisdom and true friendship to fix herself in a situation which left her the means of enjoying at intervals the society of her sister in unalloyed comfort, and obtaining the aid of Mr. Hastings in the management of her concerns, without subjecting her to the severity of his remarks on the one hand, or inducing her to submit to his control on the other, in cases which she deemed herself adequate to decide upon, as one that must answer to a higher Judge.

But for the dear child in whom all her earthly cares were centred, Mrs. Shelburne would have been happy to have purchased, by some concession, the pleasure of more frequent intercourse with her sister, and such of *her* visitants as were calculated to enliven the loneliness of one whose heart was bereaved and whose dwelling was desolate. She could not bear to deprive a child (whose acute sensibility had subjected her thus early in life to severe sorrow) of those innocent gratifications and accomplishments which she considered suitable to her situation in society, and to the season of life which was advancing upon her ; and she still more dreaded the evil of rendering religion itself uninviting and repellant in the persons and manners of relatives whom she sincerely desired her to love and esteem ; an effect certainly not to be dreaded in the person of her gentle aunt, but almost inevitable in that of her uncle, and the society in which he moved.

As time advanced Mrs. Shelburne became satisfied with the wisdom of her decision. One after another

the sons of Mr. Hastings left school, and became inmates of the paternal home, and sharers of his mercantile labours. The two eldest entered on this new situation within a short time of each other ; for the eldest was so dull and discontented, that the mother urged the necessity of procuring him a companion. Alas ! that companion added little to his pleasures ;—both were restless, uneasy—alternately irritable and melancholy—full of regret for the pleasures they had lost, and of disgust for the world on which they were entering. They alike found themselves in a situation they were not prepared to fill ; being educated for their real situation in life, and now called upon to associate with those whose views were so narrow, whose knowledge was so confined, as to render them contemptible in their eyes—which were, of course, blinded to that which might be excellent in them, for youth seldom discriminates ; it either loves or hates.

The mother sought to direct their views to the same source of happiness which shed perpetual serenity and inspired universal amenity in her own bosom ; but her sons were young men whose views were full of the turmoil, the energies, the busy hopes and wishes of early life, untamed by reflection, unsubdued by sorrow, and alive to that search for amusement which, at this season, is a positive demand of nature, from the kitten on the hearth, and the lamb in the meadow, to man in the fullest exercise of intellect, which may refine and guide, but does not therefore subdue his desire of pleasure. Denied by their father the means of enter-

with sorrow, she found that of her anxious child imbibed (from its expression) much of the same sorrowful meditation which affected her mother's mind. She became pale and spiritless, ever attentive to the pensive looks and delicate health of her mother, but incapable of any other exertion, and evidently sinking into that state of morbid sensibility which it had ever been the great object of maternal solicitude to prevent.

Mrs. Shelburne, ever alive to the calls of duty, and utterly incapable of selfish consideration, aroused herself, threw off all thought save of that which was necessary, and assuring Emily "that she was much better," proposed to place her for a year or two at a boarding-school, where, in the society of girls like herself, she could pursue the occupations and accomplishments proper for her age, and would at the same time be so near her that they would have the advantage of constant intercourse.

The plan succeeded. The puny blossom, relieved from the sombre air which had oppressed it, recovered, or rather attained the sprightliness of youth and the full play with which early enjoyments bound on the heart that is new to life, and give a charm to the most simple pleasures and occupations. It was during this period that Mrs. Shelburne formed an acquaintance with the youth to whom we have adverted.

Of the six boys who sat in the rector's pew on the Sunday, and were the objects of his week-day care, Frederick Tracy was perhaps the least likely at this time to attract a stranger's eye; for he was not well

grown for his age, was remarkably thin and pale, and had a look of thoughtfulness beyond his years, and therefore not becoming them. The very circumstance gave him interest in the sight of Mrs. Shelburne, because it reminded her of the late situation of her own family, and rendered her deeply desirous of restoring the poor boy to the same happy flow of health and spirits which now characterized her daughter.

Mrs. Shelburne's benevolence was not of a sleepy nature, and that degree of languor which was produced by her weakness was so far from being made an excuse for delay by her, that it even formed a reason why she should lose no time. "I must do my Master's work while it is day, for my night cometh," was often in her mind, and it produced in her an activity of charitable exertion and good neighbourhood rarely equalled by the strong and healthy. Her slight acquaintance with the clergyman soon led to an intimate one with his pupil; and when she saw the long eye-lashes that were wont to be cast over his dark eyes withdrawn, and the full intelligent orb lighting up his features with pleasure, as he glanced over the books, music, and drawings, in her apartment, she felt certain that she had not been mistaken in believing that his sickness (if he were sick) was that of the heart only.

Frederick Tracy at fifteen had, with all the innocence and simplicity of boyhood, a prematurity of mind which is the sad gift of early sorrow. He was the only child of his parents, both of whom were of good family, but small fortune; but his father, as a merchant

well connected, and of excellent character, maintained a very respectable situation in society, and as a husband and father was almost unrivalled in the tenderness and devotedness of his affections.

Mrs. Tracy was always delicate in her health, and when Frederick was about six years old, fell into a pulmonary complaint, for which the air of a milder climate was imperatively prescribed. At that time the political changes which convulsed all Europe placed the mercantile interest everywhere in great jeopardy, and the presence of Mr. Tracy was required in Stockholm, as the guardian of his property consigned to that city; but the health and comfort of his wife overbalanced every other consideration, and he set out with her to Madeira, accompanied by the child who had never left her a day from its birth.

Frederick could therefore well remember the bright glances of eyes that gazed at him through tears of tenderness, and the alternate roses and the marble paleness of that beloved mother, who imprinted on his mind its first ideas of beauty and its sense of unceasing and unchanging love. He could remember, too, the distraction of his father when that sweet mouth spake no longer, and even his own sense of indignation, as well as sorrow, when that idolized mother was laid in an unhallowed grave, and the Spanish maid presumed to say "she was not an angel."

Mr. Tracy returned to exchange the sorrows of a tender heart for the mortifications of a wounded spirit. His property in Stockholm was lost—the agent he had

dispatched there secured and then eloped with it ; and, during the period of his absence, had settled in Petersburg. Thither the mourner pursued him, but too late for the recovery of his rights ; he returned, deeply injured in his health, and ruined in his affairs, to pursue the only means which rectitude left—that of dividing the remainder of his fortune in just proportions among his creditors, and seeking the means of life for himself and child by personal exertion.

The uprightness of his conduct gained him friends, even in those who suffered the most from his misfortunes ; and with that liberality which ever marks the citizens of the metropolis, a situation worthy his acceptance, and suitable for his health, was provided for him ; and whilst engaged in it he placed his son in the respectable and happy asylum where he still resided. But within a year after that time another eventful change took place in his destiny.

By the death of his maternal uncle, a very considerable property in the West Indies became his, the extensive estates being equally divided between himself and his brother. This brother was an attorney, and at the time of his failure had taken care that he should be made a bankrupt in all due form, in order, as he said, to save all future litigation ; but the first exclamation of the broken merchant, on hearing of his accession of fortune, was this,—“ Now will I pay all my creditors to the last farthing.”

It was necessary that one of the brothers should set out immediately, and as the attorney was a married

man, Frederick's father was evidently the most proper. He sent for his son to bid him farewell, for he was so satisfied with his situation that he would not indulge himself with taking him so long a voyage. Poor child ! he then thought his father looked very ill—in truth, sorrow had so shattered him that hope and fortune arrived too late to restore him. He was ill during the voyage, and immediately on landing he was seized with a fever, and sunk its prey in a few hours, being only able to dictate a hasty will, putting his son under the guardianship of his brother.

On the arrival of this distressing intelligence, the elder Tracy suddenly wound up his affairs in England, and taking his own children with him, immediately set out to take possession and cognisance of the weighty affairs thus committed wholly to his care. In leaving the afflicted son of his deceased brother to the care of the good tutor with whom he had so long resided, he pursued the best, as well as the kindest conduct ; for the poor boy's personal acquaintance with his uncle's family was slight, and his sorrows flowed more freely with those to whom he was habituated.

As this bereaved child rose from infancy, a tone of pensive thought, blended with an eager pursuit of knowledge, and uncommon talents and perseverance for the search ; and whilst he appeared to those around him merely a studious boy, he was occupied with that memory of the heart which is rarely found in the happy forgetfulness of youth, and also with those aspirations after lofty, ennobling, and endearing virtues which

arose from classic conception and the treasured precepts of his tender devotion to his parents. Though living with those who were good and affectionate, yet they were too busy to pursue the timid melancholy and retiring enthusiasm of his mind to its hiding-places; and but for the generous interest conceived for him by Mrs. Shelburne, he might have brooded over past sorrows and future prospects till its strength was withered, and its best designs evaporated in unrealized imaginings.

Frederick could not throw his whole heart open to his estimable friend, for he had "communed so long with himself only," on points connected with personal situation, that his modesty forbade it; but on his literary pursuits he soon became enabled to converse with ease, and with an elegance and fluency formed by that silent society so long his dearest companions. But it was in moments like those we have recorded, when Mrs. Shelburne spoke to him with the frankness of a friend and the tenderness of a mother, that his sensibility was most excited; and the eagerness with which he listened to any anecdote, which bespoke the decided virtues of justice, generosity, or self-control, the sparkling of his eye, the throbbing of his heart, the efforts he would make to speak, and the blush which overspread his countenance, not only proved a general but individual interest in the subject.

When Emily, at the first or second vacation, found Frederick so constant a visitant at her mother's, she betrayed a little jealousy. This was followed by some-

what of *mauvaise honte* when on her returning she fancied him grown almost a man ; but as at this time her mother was evidently unusually delicate, every remembrance wore off except the impression that he sympathized in her feelings—that he loved her mother, and would do anything to console or relieve her ; a conclusion in which she reasoned *below* the truth ; for there was a flame of gratitude and affection towards this maternal friend, which in the heart of the poor orphan could have enabled him for her sake to have achieved prodigies and endured martyrdom.

To console the tedium of languor, and divert the pains, which, although often felt, were never mentioned, became by degrees the sole concern, as well as the most interesting care of these young creatures. Emily was led to make Frederick her confidante, by entreating him to persuade her mother not to send her again to school, as she could know no comfort if she were divided from a parent so beloved and in such a suffering state. This request unlocked Frederick's heart, with all its treasured plans and wishes. He spoke of his long buried parents, his far distant relatives, the sense of his own isolated situation, and, above all, the eager pantings of his heart, to fulfil what he thought was the wish of his father, on leaving his native land, but which, at all events, he felt ought to be done,—the payment of his creditors to the utmost of their demands.

Frederick lamented, that in the later letters, in which he had hinted at his desire of thus fulfilling the demands of justice, his wishes had by no means elicited the

approbation the ardent hopes of youth desire. His uncle's letter, ever short, though kind, and containing liberal remittances, no further noticed the reference made to his own future expectations, than to inform him "that the crops had of late been but indifferent; that West India property was more subject to change and loss than any other, and that it was ever desirable that young men should neither allow themselves to indulge great expectations nor romantic projects."

But when Frederick conversed on these subjects with his valued friend, and still more with her lovely daughter, the more did he feel resolved to pursue this project, even if, by his own personal exertion, he should be called to eke out his fortune for a purpose, which, according to his estimation of things, was necessary to discharge the obligations of his conscience, the injunctions of his religion, and to free his father's name from a reproach it had never in fact incurred. We will not say but in long musings and lonely rambles he had conceived that the spirit of his beloved parent urged him to fulfil this holy desire; for Frederick certainly united with the solid qualities of a comprehensive mind the fervid imagination and poetic conception which are born of a lofty spirit and a tender heart.

The ice once broken, every impression his mind had nurtured poured itself freely into the "greedy ear" of Emily, who in her turn spoke of them to her mother, at such times as she could bear to hear them best, and

give that counsel or opinion called for. Emily obtained her desire of remaining to attend a mother who was thankful for the blessing her society bestowed, and who trusted that she had now obtained the fortitude so necessary for the trials which awaited her.





III.

The Dying Mother.

TIME passed :—the invalid still lingered, enjoying at times a respite which surprised her older friends, and inspired her younger ones with those hopes which spring readily in the soil of early troubles. But Mrs. Shelburne was herself fully aware of the termination which would take place ; and with that calm fortitude which affects no power, yet evinces much ; that constant resignation which is the best proof, and in fact the highest exercise of faith ; she waited patiently for the change in her own state, but continued to the last active in her anxiety to benefit her child, and indeed all within her circle, but especially Frederick, who might be termed now the son of her adoption.

It was indeed evident to her, even before he suspected it himself, that a new and more lively preference drew Frederick to her house now, and that the brotherly affection with which he had formerly regarded Emily, had warmed into a more ardent but equally steady attachment. She had expected this, and it was consola-

tory to her to find it ; for although there was much in such an engagement to call for solicitude, and evidently either great imprudence in an early marriage, or great suffering from a painful absence to encounter, yet even these evils were far less in her eyes than those which, in her own opinion, threatened her daughter, if she entered the family of her uncle under circumstances which might invite, or at least permit, the addresses of her cousins, to any one of whom she would have been unable to commit the happiness of her child.

Tom, the youngest of these, was but a few months older than Emily, and had ever been her favourite : he was a fine lively lad, ever eager to escape from the dense atmosphere of his own home, to the purer air which, even in the pressure of sickness, was found in the dwelling of his cheerful aunt. As she grew worse and her sister became more anxious, Tom came more frequently ; and as a relation he could come oftener and stay longer than Frederick, whom an intuitive sense of propriety, a delicacy of the heart beyond all rule, had made even in his earliest visitings a timid though a happy guest. It appeared to him that this cousin, this handsome, dashing cousin, who rode the finest horse in the country, followed by two of the finest greyhounds, was there perpetually, and he could not help wishing him anywhere else.

Frederick was at this period pursuing his studies, as a young man who might either be sent to the University or suddenly called to the West Indies ; for his uncle had been so unfortunate in losing, one after another, all



THE SUPPOSED RIVAL.

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his own children, save one daughter, that he professed himself incapable of deciding what line of life he should venture upon for him; at the same time he expressed a desire to see and know him, which augured well for their future and more intimate intercourse. Fervently had Frederick desired the day when he might be called away, for the purpose of forming some general idea of the property to which he was heir—of inquiring into the nature of the demands “to which he was heir also;” but of late it was certain that he had repeatedly observed, “that it was of no use to go till he was actually of age, and the remembrance that he was yet but nineteen had not afflicted him.”

But the visits of young Hastings did afflict and alarm him also. He opened his eyes, and beheld himself a fond, tender, ardent, impassioned lover, about to be torn, by the death of his dearest friend, from the object to which his heart was devoted, who would thereby be thrown into the very arms of another—a lover of one whom he had no right to introduce to the poverty which he had inured himself to contemplate as the result of his meditated sacrifice;—now only did he hold it as such, now did he first feel its sting.

To see Emily no more,—to write to her mother, and at once confess his error and abandon it,—prove to her that his projected plan of conduct was not the dream of a scheming boy, but the purpose of a well principled man, was the resolution that presented itself as most worthy of him, as that which she would undoubtedly approve. And yet would it not be right to open his

whole heart to her?—to tell her—no! he never could tell her the extent of his love for Emily, his veneration for her own counsels, and the power such love and such regard would give him, if he were indeed so blessed as to be the chosen of her daughter. But had he any right to suppose Emily could love him? Oh, no! she was ever good and kind, but she had never, *never* felt the impetuous, agitating influence which had now first blazed, but had long silently slumbered in his heart.

Frederick's acute sensibility, united to the child-like ingenuousness of his nature, and that perfect ignorance of any world beyond the village around him, which had precluded the habit of concealing his feelings, showed at once the overwhelming anguish which took possession of his countenance as well as his bosom, and as no new or apparent cause existed, induced inquiries from the good rector, which ended, not in confession, but in increased distress.

Frederick's absence, and inquiries after his health, soon placed him near the sick chair of that invalid who could alone restore him to hope, and even to self-forgiveness. Mrs. Shelburne heard all his doubts, fears, and condemnations of his own weakness, with the feelings of one who has sounded all the depth beforehand, and is prepared where to hold out rational hopes, and where to demand the sacrifice fortitude can sustain, and principle may exact; she encouraged him to fulfil his intention of paying an immediate visit to his uncle, openly revealing his resolution of liquidating all the just debts of his father, and requesting information

on the subject; at the same time she entreated him to proceed under the immediate advice of his uncle, to do nothing rashly, and to perform even his good deeds with regularity and wisdom, as the result of a determined principle, not a merely generous impulse.

"But what has this to do with Emily? Alas! I see too plainly you have no hope to give me, where only hope would be sweet."

"When this is all settled you will still, I trust, have *something* wherewith to begin life; you will have attained the knowledge necessary for employing it; and if Emily should have no objection to venturing I will give my consent that she should marry you, in which case her fortune will form a capital that can hardly fail to ensure all that a girl so modest and bounded in her wishes can desire. I know you, Frederick, and dare trust her to your love."

Frederick flung himself on his knees before her, who had ever been to him a consoling angel.

"Trust me! oh yes! there indeed I may be trusted; but do you think will Emily herself?—I dare not hope! yet surely she has some regard for me?"

"If I did not think she had, I should not talk to you thus, Frederick; but you must remember she is yet very young, she is also very lovely, and will soon be thrown into the world. The whole case is one of much difficulty; early engagements are good for men, as they are the best shield they can carry into the world; but to women they are often a source of deep solicitude, casting a shadow over the best years of existence. I know not what to say."

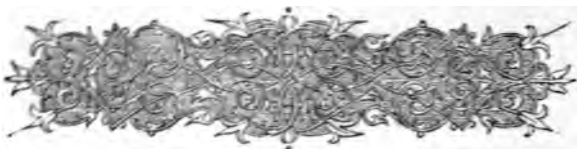
—never could my honest, noble-minded Emily be happy with such a one as him. William is candid, but weak, so that had he not made an imprudent choice he could never have been that of an intelligent mind. Tom is good tempered but utterly uninformed on every essential point ; it has been expected that he was to be taught by a kind of miracle, and whilst my excellent sister has been waiting for the work of grace she has suffered the weeds of nature to flourish rank and luxuriant ; with much that is good, poor Tom will never be a good man. They will all be valuable friends to my child, but God forbid any of them should ever become her husband.”

There was something painful, and even ominous, in the appearance of the late guests to our young lovers, and the forebodings of prophetic sorrow were but too soon verified. Mrs. Shelburne was now in the situation of a weary traveller, who sees with joy the bourne, to which being called, she has accustomed herself to contemplate : she felt as if she had been permitted to accomplish much of what she desired to do, and was thankful for the power of abstracting herself from all earthly cares, and waiting in composure and thankfulness the hour of her dissolution. On parting with Frederick the following evening, she long retained his hand, and addressed many words in the faint whisper which ushered in the silence of the tomb : the words were never forgotten ; but he to whom they were addressed was unequal to reply, and he left the room, followed by Emily, but only to the door.

When the anxious daughter returned to the bedside.

she was desired by the mother "to give her a kiss, and then go and prepare her gruel herself, as she was used to do some weeks before." Such was the *last* request of one who, living or dying, sought the welfare of her child in preference to her own. Emily obeyed with alacrity, happy that the wife of the rector was sitting with her mother, and the nurse supporting her pillows. Her task was still unfinished, and Frederick still lingered in the parlour when a little trampling was heard above, after which a light foot descended, and with the tenderest sympathy announced, "that the pure spirit had fled to Him who gave it."





IV.

Over the Graves and far Away.

EMILY felt that shock which all must feel, whenever death visits even that bed where he has been longest looked for;—affection ever trembles at the stroke; you can hope against probability, and all diseases seem to end suddenly at last. Whatever skill and tenderness could, however, bestow in consoling her under this deprivation, she experienced; for the good neighbour who had received the last breath of her mother, remained with her, yet obtruded not upon her; and her husband showed her all the attentions of a father, and the cares of a pastor. Frederick's tears flowed as freely as her own; and in his sympathy there was a cordial which at once softened and healed the heart; and she had the rare satisfaction of feeling that she had a right to indulge in the comfort of knowing herself beloved, and of distinguishing, so far as her timidity permitted, the object of her affections.

“But soon—oh, how soon!—was this scene, “pleasant though mournful,” in which the tenderness of pure and guileless love was sanctified not less by sorrow than

rectitude, blighted in its holy vigils! Mr. Hastings and his eldest son came over as soon as they were acquainted with the event, and the latter, politely thanking the worthy neighbours, professed an intention of relieving them, "by taking the cares of the house upon himself until the funeral was over;" and the former observed, that he should take Emily home in the carriage to her aunt.

But not even the awe in which the poor orphan had ever stood to her uncle could induce her to acquiesce in this decision; and on finding it was impossible to carry the point, without an authority even the cold and severe uncle was unwilling to exert at such a time, she was permitted to remain in the house; but the funeral was expedited; and on the same evening, after ceremonious adieus to the warm and sympathizing hearts of her affectionate neighbours, and still more restrained civility to the almost heart-broken Frederick, the father and son bore off their weeping relative.

Emily now first perhaps knew the extent of her loss, in the change to which it subjected her, especially from its depriving her of Frederick's society, to which she felt she had a right so long as he remained in England; but whatever might be her wishes on that subject, or the facilities which the considerate kindness of her mother had provided, Emily felt that she could not claim anything on a point so delicate: her timid spirit "could not tell its love," still less sue for her lover's presence.

In the bosom of her kind and tender aunt, Emily could pour her sorrows freely; and in listening to the

sublime consolations she bestowed, her spirits became composed, and her mind strengthened. By degrees she was enabled to catch the soarings of an imagination which ever mingled its holy reveries with the lessons of faith and hope; and she became absorbed in those glorious contemplations which carry us after the friends we have lost to the heaven where they are now seated, and undraw the curtains of futurity to reveal even "what eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard."

But far different were the reflections of Mr. Hastings from those of his wife, on their deceased sister; nor was it long before Emily's ear was shocked, and her heart alarmed and estranged, by reflections upon "mere moral people,"—"formalists, who go to church that they may be seen of men,"—"almsgiving sinners who mean to purchase heaven, like poor sister Shelburne." And when from time to time the memory of her mother brought fresh tears into her eyes, she was exhorted "not to weep for her dead parent, but for her own soul, which was dead in trespasses and sins, and to take warning, lest she also should perish."

Indignation at these moments filled the heart, and sometimes flushed the pallid cheek of the orphan; but the meek partner of this man was her beloved aunt, from whom she was ever receiving the tenderest attention. For her sake, and not because his own power over her present happiness was absolute, did she control her emotions. The house of her guardian was large and commodious, possessing many advantages over that she had left, particularly a garden and shrubbery,

where, when she could walk alone, she never failed to wander, especially in a part which looked towards the road which led to the beloved home she had left and lost.

Often would she look reproachfully towards it, as if she thought Frederick at least ought to be upon it on his way to visit her, although the few words she had been able to articulate on parting with him had forbade him to do so, or even to write, till he had heard from her, and it was certain she had not given him a single line. Never had he been so necessary to her comfort ; for all she could hope for in life seemed bound up in her connection with him : but she felt as if a spell was around her ; she feared the sternness of her uncle, the sneers of James, the raillery of Tom, and even the gentle admonitions of her aunt, who was particularly desirous to impress upon her mind, at this afflictive period, a renunciation of all worldly affections, and a devotedness to heavenly things, which was akin to monastic seclusion.

But one dull morning, when even the heavy clouds could not prevent her from pursuing the single amusement permitted, she had the satisfaction of seeing a post-chaise driving down the road, in which were her late neighbours, the rector and his lady ; and she immediately comprehended the delicate kindness by which Frederick had thus contrived to satisfy his own solicitude on her account, without disobeying her commands. Tears of gratitude stole into her eyes as she returned to the house, and prepared to receive guests so

kind, and connected by memory with circumstances so interesting.

Happily for all parties, the gentlemen were all out, and Emily could read the letter of Frederick, and even answer it without a blush. She learnt that, agreeable to the wish he had often expressed, but of late could not desire, his uncle had written, desiring him to return, and informing him, "that his estates were at the present time prosperous, and demanding that attention he was now of an age to give," so that he would be soon placed in the way of estimating his real expectations. Frederick added, "that as he appeared to be so situated as to be little likely to enjoy the sight of her, perhaps the sooner he set out the better."

As Emily read this she dropped upon her seat, and felt as if she were again called to bury her mother; but the necessity of action roused her, and she wrote him an affectionate note, saying, "that she consented to his departure, and hoped, like him, for better times; urging him to come soon, and announce his intention himself." She had scarcely given her letter to the friend, whose eloquent tongue had never ceased to dilate on the virtues of Frederick, when Mr. Hastings re-entered his house, and beheld his guests with some degree of surprise, and but little courtesy.

Much as Emily was hurt, indignant as she knew she should be to see Frederick thus treated, yet she could on no account bring herself to retract her invitation; and she hoped that her aunt, who, with all her store of virtues, was but held as a cypher in her own house,

would yet exert herself to procure them an hour in which to mourn over the past and hope for the future. How much had she to say to Frederick? How many things to do for him?—Ah! why could they not meet again as they were wont? Why could they not exchange promises of love at the grave of her who had permitted them and who could look down upon them and bless their parting?

To finish the netting of a purse begun long before, to seek amongst her books for some small ones that contained the hand-writing of her mother, and choose from the drawings in her portfolio those which had been his favourites, diverted the throbbing anguish of her heart a little, and employed her till a late hour in the night. She might, perhaps, still have continued to muse on a subject which had totally unfitted her for sleep, but she heard a little noise among the branches of the trees; and considering herself, or rather her light, the object of attention to her youngest cousin, who, with all his father's severity, yet enjoyed the improper liberty of entering at all hours, she hastily extinguished it, and hurried into bed.

The next day Frederick made his appearance as soon as he considered the coast clear, and before he could have been expected, as he had nearly twenty miles to ride. His countenance and manners alike proved the sorrow that had taken possession of his heart, and for the present quenched the generous fervour which directed his intentions, and the hopes so natural to his age; and he did not appear free from those doubts which of all others were most distressing to him as a lover,

for whilst he thanked Emily for the note she had written, he observed, "that it had been long ere she wrote it, and then only by stratagem."

"What can I do? every one seems watching me;—last night I sat up to finish this purse for you, and I was obliged to leave off, for I am certain some one was under the window."

"Yes, Emily, there was one there who has never ceased to watch you since the sad night that tore you from him, and whose very life seemed to hang on your health; though he would not intrude, lest he should add a pang to a heart already so burthened. But surely to a love so sanctioned as mine has been, these concealments are wholly uncalled for. I shall not be an intrusive guest upon your uncle, but I must be considered in the light of an accepted lover to you; our correspondence must be free, and even your timidity must give way to your generosity and resolution."

Emily answered by saying she "hoped to hear from him frequently."

"That you will certainly do; and be assured, Emily, you will always hear the simple truth: I will fulfil my promise to that dear saint who is now, perhaps, witnessing my words. I will not ask you to share my poverty; and if—if I should be so unhappy as to lose your affections, I will not claim you from one who in possessing them can make you more happy than myself. But, dear Emily, remember this, that you hold all my happiness, almost my very being, in your hands. I love you with a devotedness, an intensity of regard, of

which you can form no idea. I have no other good, no other object, on the face of the wide earth :—the world I quit, like that I go to, has only you in it.”

“Alas! and whom have I?” said Emily.

“You have another mother in your aunt, and most sincerely do I thank God that it is so; but she is the mother of a son,—a son that loves you.”

“He loves me only as a cousin; but if your suspicions were even right, Tom could never be my choice; besides he is a mere boy. You are unhappy, Frederick, but do not therefore be unjust,—there is no need to increase *my* unhappiness.”

The afflicted youth was more than appeased—he was grateful; and he at length tore himself away in an agitation of soul, so deep and so ingenuously expressed, as to affect Mrs. Hastings exceedingly; and in her promises of kindness he found the only consolation the severity of his present sufferings permitted.

Yet was Frederick in the present instance less the object of pity than Emily, though the ardour of his feelings might render his sufferings more acute. When the passion of grief had subsided, conscious rectitude, the resolution of a lofty spirit, the expectation of new and busy scenes, the remembrance of how much he might have to engage in, respecting not only the disposal, but the *nature* of his property, which he dreaded to think, was partly that of “men and brethren,” was altogether of a nature to occupy the mind: when to this was added the change of scene, the novelty of all objects, the necessity of mixing with various characters,

fully avoided as if they belonged to beings of another species ; and Emily felt assured that the British merchant, as described by her mother to have been realized by her father, was indeed a being of another and far superior order.

It would, however, sometimes happen that these sons of commerce had an eye for the lonely, lovely girl, whose mourning habit bespoke her orphan state, and her consequent freedom from parental direction ; but on such occasions, one or other of her cousins never failed to convey by some hint, the idea " of her being engaged, young as she was." Emily always felt grateful for this ; but she could not feel grateful to her youngest cousin for hovering around her as if he were the favoured lover, and ready to exhibit in the character of the dragon guarding the Hesperian fruit.

" Thus passed her time, a *dull yet troubled stream*," which first admitted a ray of light to gild its waves, in the form of a letter from Frederick. The first letter of a lover is registered in many a female heart, and by none could it be more estimated than that of Emily ; to whom it was not only dear as the communication of a friend, whose welfare she was impatient to learn, but as affording subjects on which to exercise memory and hope, and recall that love of general knowledge and particular improvement which once distinguished her, when directed by a mother's instruction, and encouraged by a lover's smile.

Whatever might be the sense of happiness Emily enjoyed from this letter, it was at least a secret one ;

for it was handed to her by her uncle, with an observation on the impropriety of such letters, and the expense of foreign postages ;—and for several days the conversation after dinner was sure to turn either “on the abominable sin of all slave-holders, on whose property the curse of God inevitably rested,” or upon “the vacillating nature of West India property, the terrible tornadoes lately heard of in Antigua ;” from whence would arise a disquisition on the wickedness and inconstancy of the human heart, especially as life advanced and temptation was given—“for then, *then*,” said Mr. Hastings emphatically, “we perceive the emptiness of all reliance on the appearance of innocence, and that the affectation of integrity with which we were pleased in school-boy days, was but an allurements of the Evil One to blind our eyes to the wickedness of the heart,—we then see that what we called righteousness was indeed but ‘filthy rags,’ that could not cover the loathsome sinfulness of the soul which wore them.”

Mr. Hastings, poor man, did not perceive how much of the “corrupt nature” he thus descanted on was itself mingling in this tirade, nor how much of bad passion it was likely to produce in the wounded bosom of his unoffending niece. It certainly answered one purpose congenial with his views, for poor Emily answered the letter of Frederick in her own room, and afterwards put it in the post-office with her own hands ; and being ignorant of the necessity of paying for foreign letters, Frederick never received it.

In his first communication he had been able to say



THE LOVE LETTER.



acted upon, at which he laughed heartily, and ran away to tell James, leaving her vexed with herself for speaking to him, and determined that she would get a wiser agent when she wrote again.

But, alas! she was not called upon for another answer. Weeks and months passed on, and no letter appeared, nor did any circumstance transpire which could account for his silence; and, most unhappily for her, the only family in the neighbourhood who could have relieved her conjectures were removed from her inquiries,—the clergyman who educated Frederick having been removed to a great distance, by the presentation of a living in the west of England, to which she had received no determinate address. She was, therefore, left to melancholy conjecture as to the cause of his silence, which, in the low state of her spirits, she was generally inclined to ascribe to death; but it is certain many sighs rose from her bosom, as she glanced for the thousandth time upon those words in his letter which spoke with admiration of his fair cousin.





V.

Ruin at the Door.

WHILST Emily consumed her time in vain conjecture, fruitless sorrow, and that hope deferred "which maketh the heart sick," very different emotions were taking place in the rest of the family, with the exception of her aunt, the "even tenor of whose way" kept on its righteous course like a stream upon the mountain, known only by its distant shining. The bustling, pushing, speculating James, had done so much business, that he was reduced to the necessity of standing still, and inquiring "whether the many difficulties with which he was encompassed could by any possible means be relieved;" like many other men who have placed themselves in this situation, his first inquiry was after the *proper*, the next was the *possible*, for relief or ruin was at the door.

The principal business done by "Hastings and Son" had been to America; and the United States, enriched by those wars which impoverished Europe, was certainly a field which was likely to be cultivated with success, and might have been so to any person whose property

was so good, and whose connections were so excellent as theirs. But the demon of avarice, leagued with that most destructive of all gambling practised by commercial speculatists, urged them into giving an extent of credit utterly incompatible with their capital ; and at this time, when they appeared most flourishing, they were in fact tottering under the weight of their honours.

James had long ago settled his brother William in Baltimore, partly for the purpose of collecting the debts of the house, and partly to remove him and his low-born spouse out of the way of observation ; for it was his intention to unite himself with some wealthy and well-connected personage, who might further his views. Emily's dower being far too small for his wishes, he left *her* to the future happiness of marrying Tom : but it did not appear that his schemes on this point were attended with the facility he possessed on other matters ; for either he never got time to court, or the objects of his wishes were displeased with the wholesale nature of his offices ; and Tom himself, wedded to his dogs and gun, showed much less pleasure in the society of his cousin than might have been expected, and proved that his principal inducement for visiting his aunt had been, in fact, the pleasure of leaving home. James, at this period, was much too busy to discuss these subjects ; his whole manners exhibited deep thought, perpetual mental discussion, and that abruptness of decision and shortness of temper which indicate a mind ill at ease. His father betrayed still stronger symptoms of solici-

tude; but he was certainly much less severe in his general manners, and he spoke more frequently to his wife and Emily with affability, and even kindness: his general indulgence to his darling Tom was even more extended; and it was evident that the trouble which rendered his son irritable gave him a lesson of humility and consideration for others which he had long needed.

This state of affairs had not continued long, when Mr. Hastings announced an intention of removing to London, where only, he observed, a mercantile business so extensive as theirs could be carried on with due convenience: his son had, in fact, submitted to be cooped up in the country much too long.

The first emotion of Emily's mind was that of pleasure on this occasion. She felt as if in London she could scarcely fail to gain some intelligence of Frederick:—besides, she was born in London; and although she had little remembrance of it, yet since she was torn from all the places associated with the best hours of her existence, the mere circumstance of change afforded somewhat to soothe and relieve a heart at times oppressed almost to breaking.

But when she looked at her aunt, when she perceived the marble paleness which overspread her countenance, and heard the tremulous voice, in which she uttered an inquiry “as to the time when they thought of removing,” sympathy with *her* feelings forbade her to rejoice—if, indeed, any emotion to which she was now subject could merit a term so strong.

The mandate to remove from a home where she had

lived so many years in honour and usefulness,—where she was the centre to which many looked for aid, and from whence she diffused constantly a beneficial influence, and to which the natural affections of her open heart had become more strongly attached, because they had not been permitted to expend themselves in the common avocations of life,—was indeed a stroke for which this heavenly minded woman was not prepared ; and it is certain that on retiring to her room, “some natural tears she dropped, but wiped them soon ;” for on the next morning, when Emily sought her for the purposes of offering consolation and assistance, she found her task already accomplished—the obedience of the wife, the submission of the Christian, were alike fully and sweetly exemplified.

“I could wish,” said she, “that my dear husband were, at his time of life, less harassed with worldly affairs, and rather retiring from the world, than entering more immediately upon it ; but I am well aware that He who calls us to this change can support us under it. I was become too fond of a place where every tree and shrub have grown under my own eye, and began to feel myself a kind of general mother, since the babes whom I clothed have claimed clothing for theirs from my hands : like the patriarch, I was beginning to rest in my little city of refuge ; but the voice of Providence calls me from it, that I may sojourn in a strange land, and be taught, from sorrow and inconvenience, to seek daily, a ‘city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’”

Emily kissed her still pale cheek, and wept.

"Do not mourn this change, my dear girl, either for yourself or me. 'Tis true we leave the dust of her who was so precious to us both; but her spirit, freed from the imprisonment of a suffering body, may accompany us in our removal, and help to sustain us in our trials. London, like all other large cities, has doubtless many evils; but it has likewise many blessings. There the word of God is preached in all its purity, the labours of Christian charity is abundant, and the arts of civilized life (those pure sources of mental enjoyment, in which human power appears least sullied with human depravity) may be enjoyed in a manner we can never hope for in the country:—Oh, we shall be very comfortable—we shall have much to be thankful for."

As every day which succeeded seemed to increase this wish and power of looking at the bright side with her aunt, Emily, whose long-depressed spirit needed change, and who was precisely at that season of life when novelty is itself a pleasure, began now to busy her mind with expectations and preparations for all that was to come, and learned with some trouble that it could not be made convenient to remove until she had accomplished her twentieth birthday; at which time the sale of her mother's house was to take place, in order to fulfil the conditions of her will.

The recollection of the reasons why this bequest had been thus made, the remembrance of her prospects at the time, and the consciousness of how much more happy she might have been, affected her deeply, and

led her to observe, more than she had done, the evident dejection of her uncle's spirits. As sorrow, like death, is a great equalizer, she gained courage frequently to address him ; and finding that he always listened to her with pleasure, and appeared to find relief from the pressure on his spirits by talking with her, she became by degrees much interested in his cares and concerns, and even ventured, at her aunt's instigation, to engage him in conversation upon them perpetually.

One day she observed with a sigh, and an averted face, "that it was a great pity the family should be detained in the country on her account: there was no necessity now for the settling of her affairs until she was actually of age, when all might be done at the same time."

"Very true, Emily ; as you say, it will be better to be done then. I hope, long ere then, to have large remittances from America ; and you may—God only knows—you may also receive news from that side of the globe. At present we are both poor and bereaved, though in a very different way ; but a year may bring many things to pass, and, at all events, it is our duty to hope and to judge favourably. When people and property are at such an immense distance, we know not what may be occurring ; we must trust and be patient."

Although in this speech it was evident the mind of Mr. Hastings was running still more on the thousands he had sent over the Atlantic, than on the virgin affections his niece had also sent on the same faithless

element ; yet as this was the first time he had ever hinted at Frederick's silence, without some bitter sarcasm, or sweeping condemnation, Emily felt her heart more than usually softened towards him ; and she observed, though with many blushes, "that she had never allowed herself to *condemn* that which she could not help lamenting : she was persuaded that (she spoke with difficulty) death alone had—"

"No, Frederick is not dead,—at least, he was not dead three months since, but he was looking ill, very ill ; for I know a person——It is certain I have no right to say he is living now, but I hope he is, I *sincerely* hope so."

That *sincere hope*, though it conveyed no part of its confidence to Emily, but rather gave her an assurance that something very terrible had befallen Frederick, and was dragging him into an early grave, yet certainly inspired her with more sympathy and tenderness for her uncle ; which increased exceedingly from the softened tone of his general manner towards her aunt, and, in fact, to all around him. This she imputed entirely to the circumstance of finding himself about to leave his native place, and the society in which he had long held so important a part, together with a persuasion that although James spoke continually of monies coming in, and occasionally made a display of considerable sums, they had in fact lost more by his great management than they had gained.

No more was said about the sale of Emily's property in her presence ; but their own house and furniture

were sold to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who paid a sum of money in part of payment, and gave a bond for the rest. Emily and several other persons were present when the bond was signed, which was for two thousand two hundred pounds: the purchaser inquired where he should transmit the interest when due, observing that he would pay the principal in a year and a half from that time, perhaps sooner.

Mrs. Hastings never presumed to interfere in any matter of business, knowing that both her son and her husband would alike turn a deaf ear to her counsels; but as James was now in London, and Mr. Hastings under much depression of spirits, and very gentle, she laid her hand at this moment upon his arm, and said in a supplicating tone,—

“My love, you know *that* is precisely the sum of money for which you are guardian to your poor brother Charles’s children,—suppose you put it into Emily’s hands: she will receive the interest, and be, I am certain, a faithful guardian of it for the children; and you have so very much to do in the world when you should have but very little, that it is right to make our young people help you in cases where they can.”

A deep gloom came over the brow of Mr. Hastings, but it was that of sorrow, not anger: he revolved the matter a few moments in his mind, and then said, “You are right, Emily may be trusted; and it will certainly ease my mind and my hands much, if she will take charge of this.”

Emily advanced, signifying her willingness to do anything in her *power*.

"This is a matter quite within your power, my love," said Mr. Hastings; "for you have nothing to do but send the interest half-yearly to the widow, till her twin children are of age, and then divide the principal, which is all they have, poor things; if I can make it more I will. The mother has a small annuity; but it is so small, that you must be always particular in sending the interest as soon as you receive it. I am sure our friend Mr. Stanton, so long as he holds it, will never allow you to be inconvenienced by delay, for he is a very regular man."

Mr. Stanton was at this time in earnest conversation with his attorney, but on being told that the interest was to be henceforward paid to Miss Shelburne, who would be the holder of his bond, he observed only, "With all his heart, provided she did not marry without giving him notice; for though he was willing to be a fair lady's debtor, he might have less liking for her wedded lord." This possibility for the first time seemed to strike Mr. Hastings; who, putting the bond into Emily's hand, said in a low but solemn manner,—

"Emily, if you fulfil your aunt's wishes and mine by accepting this trust, remember that it is one of the most awful nature;—it is for the helpless, the fatherless. Never resign it, even to your husband;—no! not if you should marry my son."

Emily started, as if she felt that to be impossible; but recollecting herself, she took the bond, saying only,

"I hope I shall do nothing wrong;" and immediately retired.

Many thoughts rushed at this time through her mind, and she recollected many little circumstances which induced her to believe that there was something like a positive intention in James to marry her to Tom, when the latter should be of age, to which period some months were still wanting; and she felt assured that the habitual ramblings of her young cousin from his pleasureless home, his personal vanity, and the pains he had taken to keep away all other lovers, by assuring him that he had no rival, was probably the reason why he had never taken the trouble to persecute her with his addresses. Emily was not romantic; and though both lovely and interesting in the highest degree, she had been hitherto saved from the trouble of rejecting suitors; yet she certainly did feel afraid of Tom, for she had a very great affection towards him as a relation, and would have felt it difficult to be firm in any mode of conduct which he might deem unkind; yet her disapprobation of him as a future husband was so decided, that she needed in this case no reference to the past to save her from the future. She must not only have obliterated all her mother's lessons from her mind, but also entirely have changed that taste for refined intelligence, that love for deep-seated virtue and unobtrusive piety, which had "grown with her growth," in the society of Frederick Tracy, on whom her mind was at this time, with renewed anxiety, continually meditating.



VI.

The Finishing Blow.

THE hour now speedily arrived which tore the family for ever from the home of many years: and the feelings of Emily were severely tried in parting with those poor neighbours, to whom she had of late been frequently the minister of her aunt's maternal cares; since to her they could speak freely of their love to madam, and all the fears they felt, "that she would never live in London, but drop off as the rest of her family had done." Many a bad omen was related, many a dismal foreboding given, and, as if the evil of the day was not sufficient, no circumstance of sorrowful tendency omitted; which is the usual practice of the poor to those they deem the rich. Their journey passed without incident, and they arrived safely in the precincts of Bedford Square, where James had secured them excellent lodgings.

But James himself was not there to receive them, and Tom, who travelled on horseback, had not arrived. The heart of each parent seemed to sink, or look to Emily for support, which she was anxious to bestow,

but found difficult to offer, as she was certain that the presence of their eldest son was of greater importance to them at this juncture than they chose to own; for it was certain, from many circumstances, that Mr. Hastings had entrusted him with something which he now desired exceedingly to take out of his hands.

The following day passed, and still James did not appear. The next was the Sabbath; and it was evident that both alike struggled to find in the duties and consolations of the day that abstraction from worldly concerns which it was impossible to obtain, even when attending a celebrated honourable preacher in the neighbourhood, to whom they had long looked forward as the minister of the greatest good their souls could receive. Every hour seemed to increase the burden on their spirits.

Tom arrived in the course of this evening; and even the conduct which formerly would have excited the severest reprehension, that of travelling on the Sabbath, failed to elicit remark from the father, so much was he humbled or altered by the solicitude he felt; but Emily was soon rendered awake to the circumstance of her cousin's round declaration, "That he would take her everywhere on the morrow; but that he should never lose sight of her again, till he took her for better for worse."

"Let us see that you deserve her," said the father.

"And that she thinks you do," observed the mother.

"Oh, Emmy and I understand each other," said Tom, with a shrug; "in the country girls are obliged to

appear shy, and all that ; but in town, 'tis another affair,—isn't it, Coz ?”

“I wish you would not talk so foolishly, Tom,” said Emily with a look of anger, not unmixed with alarm ; for without attaching any determinate idea to her sense of fear, she yet felt as if she were less defended, from any evil before her, in London than the country, and she perceived that her uncle had no longer the power of controlling his sons. He had been severe and ungracious to them as boys, but had yielded all that enabled him to retain authority over them as men. He had forfeited love first, and wealth afterwards, and nothing remained to him now.

Nearly ten days elapsed before James appeared, and it was then under such circumstances as to create alarm rather than pleasure : his face was haggard, his dress disordered ; he had travelled from Liverpool, he said, on the outside of a coach, and eagerly asked for wine, which he swallowed with an avidity so different from his usual habits, as almost to excite terror in those around him, who sat in silent expectation of something they yet dreaded to hear.

At length, Mr. Hastings, summoning somewhat of his former importance, observed,—

“We thought it strange, James,—I say, we thought it somewhat singular, son James,—that we did not—”

“I dare say you did ; but there are many strange things in the world. However, to cut the matter short, I must tell you that I ran down to Liverpool after what I expected to be a good thing,—a capital thing,—

'twas a cargo of goods from Bondara—and—but 'tis no use to mince the matter—so here goes—

As he poured another bumper of wine down his throat, Mr. Hastings said, apprehensively,—

“You certainly could not think of purchasing, James, when we had so many bills out? when in fact you—”

“Yes I could: surely the greater the demand for money, the greater the necessity for procuring it; and I hoped by a lucky hit to recover all. The securities in my pocket, which I most sincerely wish you had continued to deny me, furnished the means. In short, I raised the wind—flew to Liverpool—outbid all competitors, and became the possessor of a ship-load of horrid rubbish, the most complete take-in that ever—”

The narrative was interrupted by a deep groan, and in another moment Mr. Hastings dropped lifeless on the floor.

Happily, the loud shrieks of Emily brought up the mistress of the house, who, entering the room, perceived the cause of alarm, and procured immediate medical assistance. A vein was opened, the stunned, afflicted man by degrees recovered his senses, and with them a knowledge of his sorrows;—a perception of evil far beyond all that he had even imagined as the consequence of his past imprudence.

James, suddenly *sobered* by the sight of his father's situation, and the rigid paleness of his silent mother, who appeared like a martyr suffering under the torture, began to pour words of comfort, as well as he was able, on the ear of his unhappy parent; he protested “that

he had been drunk and mad ; that things were not nearly so bad as he had represented them—the cargo would yet turn to account—the vessel would be up in a day or two, and they would examine her, and make the most of his bad bargain.”

But deep groans, and a repeated wave of the hand, indicating a desire that he would depart, was all the answer of the father, who continued throughout the whole night to struggle inwardly, as with a torrent that overwhelmed his heart ; at some times fixing his eyes on his wife, or niece, with an expression of horror for a moment, then suddenly averting them, as if writhing under acute pain, and yet unwilling to express it.

Ever a man difficult of access, the sympathy of silence for some time was all that either had it in their power to offer, though the heart of the wife was always ready to plead the consolations of Divine goodness ; at length Emily, deeply affected, and remembering that—

“The grief which cannot speak,
Whispers the o’er-fraught heart and bids it break,”

ventured, in a tone of apprehensive tenderness, to say, “Would it be better, my dear sir, for me to leave you with my aunt ? Perhaps talking freely might relieve you.”

The patient shook his head as if to negative the inquiry ; but as Mrs. Hastings looked approval, she determined to leave them for a short time. Before going out she stooped over the couch on which her uncle lay and pressed her lips on his fevered cheek. ’Twas the

first time she ever remembered to have kissed him, and but for the overwhelming emotion of the hour she would have wondered at her own temerity ; and even now she started at the effect it produced, for half rising, he suddenly flung his arm around her, and uttering words for the first time since his seizure, cried, " God bless thee, my poor girl," and burst into a torrent of tears.

Not the stricken rock touched by miraculous power could have been beheld with more astonishment than both his compassionate attendants evinced, for in his afflictions they were afflicted even before, and no determinate object of selfish suffering was offered to their consideration ; they intuitively comprehended how great must be the agony, how intense the struggle, which thus bowed down, as it were, a giant before their eyes, and reduced to more than infantine weakness him who had appeared to move in a sphere above, or beyond the common sympathies and suffering of his nature. Though no man was less endearing in his manners, yet it was certain that he was deeply affecting in his sorrows.

Long and bitterly he wept ; but as the passion of grief subsided he looked up at his wife, as if he were capable of listening to her, and would be thankful to hear her speak ; and if ever human voice could say to the overwhelming flood of sorrow, " Peace, be still !" *she* had the power ; since she united every sacred motive for the self-control she recommended, every promise of divine aid his circumstances might demand, with a calm assurance that whatever might be her portion for future life, whether of poverty, degradation, or labour, she was

ready to enter upon it cheerfully, to accept it as a cup of suffering prepared by the hand of mercy, for some unseen but most benignant purpose—as a trial of faith and patience, given to them as “seals of their inheritance.”—as proofs that they were “heirs of the promise,” children who, being loved, were chastened.

Mr. Hastings looked at her with tenderness and gratitude; but he seemed to be incapable of lifting up his heart, in the manner she recommended, as he answered, “Thank you, my love, yours is indeed good advice, and your professions worthy of yourself; but what do *you* say, my little girl?”

“I say, that when you are better, I am sure (let my cousin have done what he may) your united exertions will soon bring everything round; that I can take charge of my aunt, whom I will never leave, and by-and-by, sir, you know, I shall have money to offer you; and cannot I lend you some now?”

Another agonizing burst of sorrow interrupted the promise on her lips; and when it subsided, which was not for a long time, he entreated her to retire; “he could see no one but his wife at present.” Emily retired, but not to rest. The day was then risen, and the usual occupations of life taking place, but a deep desolation—a silence as of death—reigned in their apartments; and Emily sat down in the drawing-room under an oppression of spirit as great as the king of terrors could have inflicted.

After a short time, the sobs of her aunt were audible, and short, broken words, spoken in a voice of agony

utterly different to the resignation she had lately evinced, broke from her lips, and to her increased astonishment, were uttered in a tone of reproach which it seemed cruel to use to a man so afflicted. Conscious that she ought not to hear even a sound which conveyed a meaning, Emily fled from the room, to seek in her own chamber composure to her agitated spirits, and the power of beseeching almighty mercy on those for whom she wept, and almighty guidance to her own bewildered mind.

She had passed some hours in this state, when a message from Tom, entreating her to make his breakfast, drew her to a sense of her own wants; and although feeling very ill, she immediately descended.

"It is very late, past two, I believe, but I couldn't go to bed till I thought my father was out of danger, so that must be my excuse. Why, Emily, child, you look like a ghost!"

"I have not been in bed."

"I thought as much; upon my word, James has made a pretty kettle of fish, take it all together, with his magnificent doings. My idleness, as he called it, was a much better thing, but the fact is I never *was* idle, either I was fishing, shooting, or hunting, continually."

"More the pity; had you been in the counting-house you might have persuaded James to attend more to my uncle's wishes."

"Not a bit; Jemmy got the length of his foot, from pretending to get money, and cut a dash, both which father loves dearly; besides, he knew in his heart that he owed us something, for never allowing us to dance,

or go to a play, as other people do ; had I done *that*, as the Bensons, and Castletons, and other young men did, like them I would have spent hours at the desk every day with pleasure. I should have loved my father then, and been delighted to have helped him, but as it was, I felt like nobody else ; I hated our dull, mum-keeping home, and would have left it long since if you had not been there."

"Where is James now?"

"Gone into the city to see after his precious bargain, and poor father is gone after him in a hackney-coach, for he declares he will never again set foot in his own. William went with him, as it would have been shocking to send him alone, and I was not up at the time."

On hearing this Emily would have gone to her aunt directly, but learnt from a message that she was then endeavouring to seek some repose.

The day passed in dulness and extreme solicitude, Mr. Hastings did not return till evening, and bore evident marks of recent illness and present distress. He sat down to tea with his niece and youngest son, but Mrs. Hastings did not join them. Tom soon after went away, saying he was particularly fond of seeing the streets by lamp-light. When he was gone Mrs. Hastings entered, her looks were haggard and bewildered, and she sat down in perfect silence, as if afraid to trust her voice with those inquiries she yet most probably was anxious to make, and with her eyes bent on the carpet, as if it were alike painful to meet either those of Emily or her husband.

After two long melancholy hours, neither solaced by confidence nor relieved by complaint, they rose, as if mechanically to separate for the night. The want of family prayer at a time when all seemed so much to need the assistance it suplicated, the absence of both sons when their parents were in such distress, but above all, the settled melancholy which appeared to sit upon her aunt's usually open and peaceful countenance, all struck coldness and sorrow into the heart of Emily, which were even worse to bear than the horrors of the preceding evening.

Conscious that she wanted repose she soon got into bed, but to sleep was yet impossible ; and one half hour after another had been marked by the novel intimations of the watchman, till three, when, just as she sunk into slumber, a tap at the door was followed by an entreaty, in the voice of her uncle, that she would throw something on and come down into the breakfast-parlour.

Emily had a rush-light in her room, and she instantly obeyed the summons, and ran down stairs, where she found Mr. Hastings, who was cording a small portmantau, and dressed as if for immediate travel, notwithstanding his indisposition.

"My dear sir, where are you going?" said Emily, in evident surprise, which was increased when he made a sign for her to be silent until he should have closed the door and ascertained that no one was stirring who could hear him, when, turning to her, he said, in a voice almost inaudible from extreme emotion,—

"Emily, Emily, you must pardon me for this last act

of cruelty towards you ; you are already ill with watching and anxiety, yet I cannot go without seeing you, and without entreating forgiveness of injuries which yet I do not expect you to grant."

"Dear sir, do not talk of *me*; but tell me, do tell me, what you are about now ! I think you very unequal to travelling."

"No, Emily, I am yet but little turned the prime of life; I have not the excuse of age or inability, I therefore go a determined servant at least to a good cause, and should I prove its victim I will not complain. I am an unhappy and unworthy member of the Church of Christ, but I will not further dishonour it, I will prove, at least, that I am intentionally honest, and have endeavoured to recover that which a worldly and avaricious spirit occasioned to lose. I will go to South America first, with this unfortunate purchase, I will then explore the United States, and it will be hard indeed if I do not obtain at least a moiety of my property, and with that I will be contented, *thankful*, for it will satisfy every one of my creditors."

"You are in the right," said Emily; "my mother would have done the same."

"Thy *mother*, child?" said he, suddenly starting with a look of inexpressible anguish.

"Yes; she always said integrity to man was the test of obedience and gratitude to God; that it was the one great law of our divine master, and the bond which binds us all to each other."

"She was right, she was right; but listen to me,

Emily," cried he, in great agitation, grasping her arm. "You know that we are involved, even now, to ruin, which I leave my wife, my country, my children, if possible to retrieve. You heard James say that I had furnished him with certain bonds, securities, and mortgages, when he came to London, you remember?"

"I do, sir, perfectly, because he wished you had *continued* to refuse him."

"Oh that I had! they were merely put into his hands in order to satisfy the most pressing of our creditors that we possessed actual property, to assure them of their safety. Alas! in the action itself, to which I unwillingly consented, there was deceit, although it was only intended as the means of gaining time; but he that acts a lie knows not the end of his delinquency. The securities so shown, all, *all* were *yours*, Emily, you know what followed."

For a moment Emily stood overwhelmed, astounded, at length she exclaimed,—

"And have I nothing left? nothing with which to support my aunt? nothing to help you with when I am of age? Oh! do not, *do not* leave us to poverty and misery like this."

Emily was about to sink on her knees to entreat, to compel him to remain, but at the very moment her uncle himself sunk a suppliant before *her*, crying, "Forgive me, Emily, forgive me."

Horror-struck, and cut to the heart, she eagerly raised him, and again and again repeated that she *did* forgive him, and called on God to bless him; but that "she

must not be left, she durst not be left, James was her enemy, an object of intolerable terror."

"Tom will soon be of age, he will protect you."

Emily, overwhelmed with the rapid occurrences of the last two days, and dreading all that lay before her, felt in these words new cause for alarm, and, putting her hand to her forehead, sunk back fainting. She was sensible of being laid on a sofa, but knew no more till she found the housemaid chaffing her temples, and her aunt, in her dressing-gown, leaning over her, and shedding tears that fell upon her cheek.

A sense of the still deeper sorrows of this dear relative immediately roused Emily from contemplation of the future to a sense of present sorrow, and the necessity of assuming that fortitude she inwardly prayed for, but could not be said to possess; she instantly raised herself, and, clasping the hand of her aunt, said tenderly, "I will never leave you, dear aunt. I will wait upon you, work for you, doubt not we shall do very well together, we will support each other."

"We shall be supported by Him, my child, whose strength is perfect in weakness, who will not break the bruised reed, and that maketh those 'who sow in tears to reap in joy.'"

But although the pale countenance was calm, as it thus uttered the sacred language of faith and patience, Emily almost trembled as she surveyed the ravages the last day and night had made in her person, like the effect of an earthquake on the face of nature, when the gradual decay of ages is anticipated in a moment, so

had a few hours done the work of years, and all the effects of age and sickness appeared in withering features and a bending form, and that line struck full on Emily's memory as she gazed upon her,

"The saint sustained it, but the woman died."

In a very few words each party gave the other to understand that they now knew all the worst. Mrs. Hastings declared, "That the sufferings of Emily on her entrance into life were those alone, which, in the whole course of her married years, had ever drawn from her the language of remonstrance to her husband," an assertion no one who knew her could doubt; and Emily protested,—

"That if it were not for seeing her beloved relative, her second mother, thus reduced, she could bear her own share of suffering firmly."

It was therefore evident that each would comfort and aid the other; but, alas! both were alike strangers to the world around them; both alike unacquainted with the path in which necessity and duty alike compelled them to enter; and as poor Tom, whose faculties seemed absolutely suspended, was not more competent to act than themselves, they were compelled to remain in the present state of inaction, and constant inquietude, till James returned. It was late in the following evening when he entered, and his first question was to inquire, "If the news he heard was true? Was his father really off? Could he have been so base as to throw all the burden upon his shoulders?"

"He is gone to remove the burden from us all; at least, the burden of conscious guilt," said his mother.

"And what is to become of you and Emily? Has he left you any money?"

"Not any. I insisted on his taking all the little we had. How otherwise could he prosecute so long a voyage, or travel in a strange country? You must sell the carriage and horses, remove us to cheap lodgings, and put us in a way of living in that state of poverty it is the will of God we should submit to."

"And pray," said Tom, with a deep sigh, "get some kind of a place, that is, some employment for me. I *must* do something. A kind of a clerk's place, where it is not confining, and where they would not object to Sancho and Fury. There must be plenty of such places in London. I wouldn't mind taking a hundred a year to begin with, brother."

"I daresay you would not, Tom; but many people would mind how they gave it you," replied James, as with a satirical smile he looked towards Emily, as if inquiring her thoughts.

But though she was now calm in her demeanour, no smile could rise to her lips save that of disdain towards him who had overwhelmed his respectable family in shame and poverty, and most probably brought his father's grey hairs with sorrow to a far distant grave. She could not conceive by what sophistry he could so far soothe his conscience as to obtain effrontery to appear thus easy towards the mother he had reduced to poverty, before her also whom he had literally robbed;

nor how he could dare to sneer at the brother who, but for him, might certainly have continued in unblamed possession of the means to enjoy his country pleasures. Her indignation was visible in her ingenuous countenance; and James, who was determined not to offend her, assumed a different style of conduct; lamented the terrible change that must take place, and professed a desire to do everything necessary in their unhappy situation.

He was as good as his word. With a celerity that surprised them all, and a pain that can only be conceived by those who have experienced it, their servants were sent back into the country; their carriage and plate disposed of; and they were removed to lodgings on the Hampstead Road, which, though small, were pleasant and convenient. Others were taken for Tom, which would enable him to look out for the situation which he continually talked of procuring; and James protested, "That he could live nowhere but in the city, where it must be the business of his life to run amongst the creditors, and soothe them as well as he could; receive the remittances he had a right to expect, and apportion them as well as he was able. For his own part he could live on a crust. His mother had now a sum equal to her wants for a long time, and before it could be expended Tom would be of age, and his grandmother's little legacy of five hundred pounds would come in and help on till better times arrived."

So kind was the conduct of James, so specious his manners, and so trifling his personal expenses, that Emily gladly restored to him the pity and confidence

her own nature prompted her to accord. But no sooner did her ever open countenance bespeak the altered feelings of her mind, than he began to question her on the affair that lay nearest his heart ; for which purpose he persuaded her to walk with him into the fields near Hampstead, and when they were at a sufficient distance from observation, he began to question her in a tone which rose from civil inquiry to insolent demand.

"Emily, you recollect you took charge of a bond for my father?"

"Yes, I did ; for your uncle Charles's children."

"Children ! Fiddlesticks ! You took it for yourself, as a part of that money which your mother ordered to be paid on your twentieth birth-day."

"I know such money ought to have been paid ; but the bond in question was given to me expressly to keep for those children. I have talked over the matter with my aunt, who is exceedingly interested for these poor little creatures, whose father was a worthy young man, I believe, and much to be pitied, and whose widow is a very good ——"

"Yes, yes ; 'tis all very fine ; but in this world we must all shift for ourselves. I can't blame you for trying to hold fast what you can get ; but the fact is, you are not of age—you cannot hold it, nor act upon it—it has even already injured your character (as an honest person) even to think of such a thing, and the sooner it is out of your hands the better. You must give it to me, that I may call in the money, and pay it to my father's creditors."

"Indeed, James, I cannot break my word."

"Nonsense; you cannot keep it; 'tis my property, not yours, as my father's partner. I tell you, 'twas paid for the sale of my effects, and is mine."

"Then where is the children's money?" said Emily. "If you will prove to me *that* is safe, I will give it up, but never till then. I have reason, great reason, to blame myself for undertaking such a trust, young as I am, and liable to be blamed; but I will never give it up. I received it with a clean hand, and I will hold it with a firm one. My own misfortunes afford me an awful lesson."

Stung with this indirect reproach, James now seized her arm with a furious volley of oaths, equally dictated by the passion of the moment, and the belief that a promise, however extorted, would be held sacred by her. Terrified by words to which she had never been subjected, and alarmed from finding herself at so great a distance from all road or dwelling, she entreated him in the most soothing manner to be calm, and promised him unbounded submission on any other point. Her beauty, her tears, and even her firmness, had its proper effect. His anger gave way; but it was followed by a passion of grief so overwhelming as to render him (terrible and even hateful as he had lately appeared) an object of the deepest compassion.

He told her, what she could scarcely doubt, that he was looked upon with distrust and contempt by all the creditors, as a man who had brought ruin on his father, and condemned him to undertake those exertions and

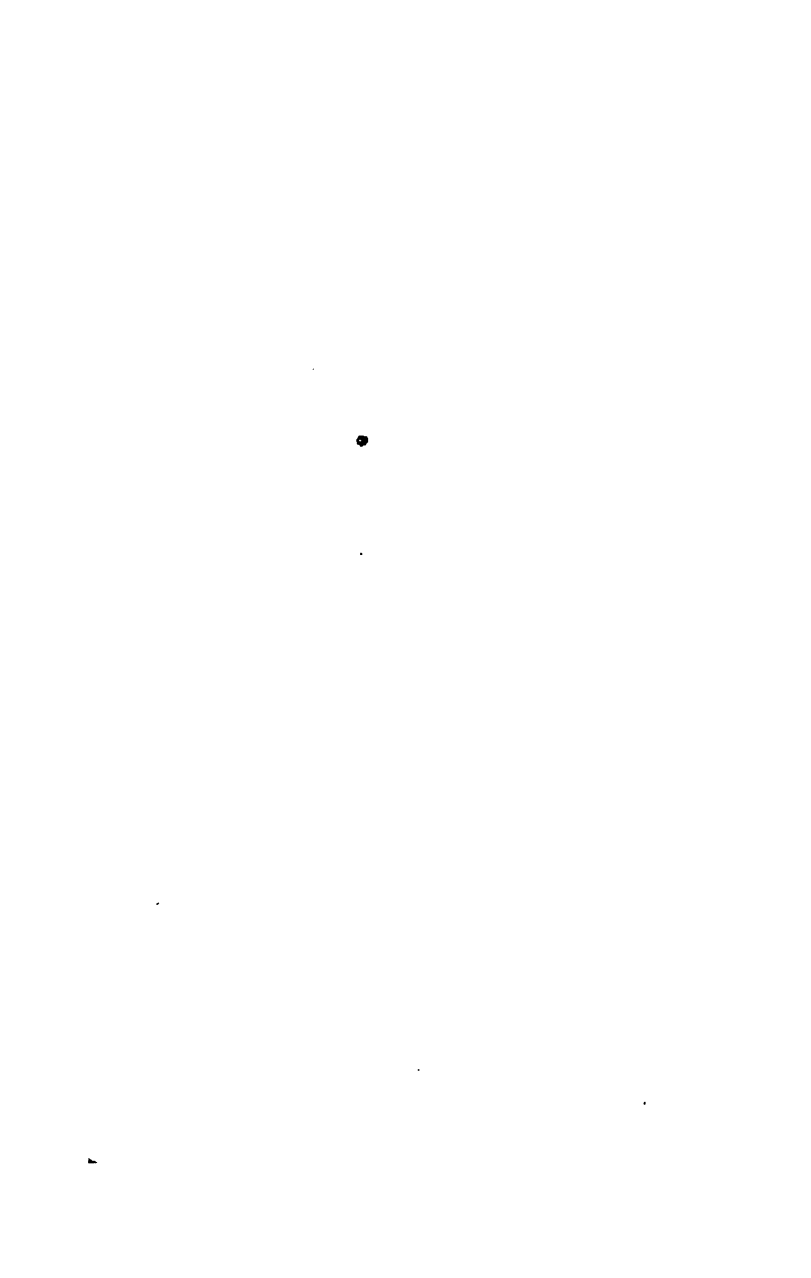
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Emily sunk with her face to the ground ; but she did not faint, she was not so happy as to become quite insensible, but she felt as if struck with a pang beyond that of death, which was, however, somewhat relieved by hearing the voice of James, uttering a low and indistinct curse, and this was immediately followed by a loud hollo, and the sound of feet clambering over a gate.

Emily raised her head, and saw James wrapping his handkerchief round his hand, which bled profusely. In a moment two men, whom she recollected as having passed them twice on the road, came up ; one of them raised her, and the other immediately took up the pistol, which was on the grass, and then, without ceremony, began to search on the person of James for the other.

“ Let me alone, fellow ; I have no other weapon.”

“ That’s my look out, sir ; for you are my prisoner : we had an eye on you pretty well all along, but being wi’ a lady, you see, as I scorns to do anything as is ungenteel, if so be as you’d behaved proper, I’d ha sin you home first ; as it is, I think she’s quite as well without your company : pistols, and blood, an’ them there things, ben’t fit for no oman, ’specially poor young craters like miss.”

James looked at Emily, as if to appeal to her memory, that he had only spoken the truth in declaring his distress ; and the paleness and distraction of his countenance had its full effect in awakening compassion, which increased in proportion as her fears vanished, or rather exchanged their object. She endeavoured to







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speaking a few broken words of comfort, and to persuade the men to let him at least return home for the purpose of having his hand examined. This they refused, saying, "the gemman would have every attention in the place, where he might be accommodated for the night;" and they offered to go back and take care of her to the Hampstead Road, where they placed her in a coach, proposing to step into a public-house with their prisoner, for the purpose of giving him the means of staunching the blood, which continued to flow from his wounded hand.





VII.

The Fallen Family.

IN mentioning the circumstance of James's arrest, Emily fully accounted to the alarmed mother for all the marks of recent terror and remaining trepidation which she exhibited ; for of all other evils, that of imprisonment was, to the conception of poor Mrs. Hastings, the most deplorable ; because she considered it as reducing a man to the rank of the wicked, and compelling him to associate with them. Poverty and pain, she held as the inflictions of heaven, and she could willingly submit to the one, and endure the other ; but imprisonment she considered the punishment of one frail and erring creature over another, at which even resignation revolted, and it was ever the prayer of her heart, "Let me fall into the hands of God, but not into the hands of man.

Under this view of the subject, added to all the natural tenderness of a mother for her first-born, it was no wonder that she should eagerly propose to liberate James by the sacrifice of the money, which she possessed from the sale of their effects, and which it is but justice

to say, he had paid faithfully into her hands, with the reserve of a trifling sum for his own wants, and a similar provision for the more extensive demands of Tom. When this point was considered of, among the three persons who might be justly deemed alike interested in the affair, not one could prevail on themselves to negative it. The mother, although far more experienced, thought only on the sufferings of her son, which she judged of by a false estimate. Tom, ever sanguine, hoped to get a situation soon, and, besides, was at once too generous to refuse, and too thoughtless to foresee; and Emily was too much affected by the dreadful scene she had endured, to be capable of weighing the case in her mind, and having at such a terrible hazard been firm in refusing him what she deemed the property of another, was little inclined to add to his affliction, by withholding what she might consider in some measure her own. It was therefore speedily concluded, that Tom should proceed to the place of James's temporary confinement, and relieve his mind by an assurance of speedy release.

To the surprise of the younger brother, James for some time peremptorily refused to comply with their wishes for his emancipation; he professed an intention of removing into the jail at Newgate, where he should at least be safe, since the numerous writs which he knew to be out against him, would not fail eventually to place him there, and said "that to take the money which was the sole support of the family to satisfy one demand, and that a trifling one, was subjecting them to

misery without answering any efficient purpose;" he added, "You and I, Tom, know very well, that with all my father's sanctity and all that, he was a constant tyrant to my mother till the time that his troubles pulled him down;—his temper was a sort of perpetual blister, pulling both day and night; and the relief she has now from that, makes her endure all other things like an angel; but it is evident that she is sadly brought down already for the want of the comforts of life:—if I take this money, it will be literally taking her bread, the staff of life."

"But if you go to jail, you will take life itself. I am sure the very name of Newgate is sufficient to kill her; the idea that any one of our family should go there is enough to do it: if you saw how ill both her and Emily are, James, you"—

"*Ill!* ay, I have injured Emily beyond what you, or even she, can conceive. I will never, *never*, see *her* again; but I have a panacea for some of her sorrows in store,—perhaps for others. Well! I will go out though it will take a round sum, better than three hundred, and then I shall want the means of flight, for I shall instantly depart for Liverpool or Bristol, from whence alone I can look for comfort, and where I can probably do some good."

"That's right," cried Tom, eagerly producing the money, and adding, as with alacrity he counted out the bills, "in two months I shall be of age, and get my godmother's legacy, and then we shall *all* have plenty."

James shook his head and wiped his eyes, as he

looked on the open countenance and free action of the artless lad, whose fine person and glowing complexion were already withering beneath the ungenial breath of London, and of care ; which, though it found no resting-place in his buoyant and inconsiderate mind ; yet paid many visits there through the medium of his affections."

"When you are of age," said James, after a pause, "you will indeed have a little money, and I am certain you will apply it to the best purpose ; but *remember* it is but a trifle ; therefore do not abate for an hour your endeavour to obtain a situation ; still less, allow yourself to think of Emily as a wife. The injury she has sustained, the sorrows she has, and must continue to endure, are more than sufficient."

"Surely you don't think *I* should add to her sorrow ? I, who have loved her all my life, and was always told both by you and my father, that I was to marry her as soon as she had forgotten young Tracy."

"But she has not forgotten him—she will never forget him," said James in great agitation.

"'Tis two years since she heard from him, and more than that, a great deal, since she saw him ; and I am sure she has had trouble enough to put him out of her head ten times over since then : for instance, when I first sold Fury, I felt quite lost, and thought of it continually ; but so many other things have come across me, I never think of her now, but am quite as happy with only Sancho, and the two capital creatures I left in the country, scarcely ever come into my head ;—it is not in my nature to fret long after anything, I really believe."

"So do I; therefore I hope you won't fret after Emily, and especially that you won't tease her, since she has the good sense to know it is impossible for you to live on love, and therefore you must not marry until my father's return—on! not even on the strength of your legacy—not even if my mother should be weak enough to second your wishes."

"That is very hard; for haven't I bottled up all I could have said about it these two years, just because I wasn't of age, forsooth? and now when I am on the very point of it, you come out with 'mustn't do this, mustn't say that.' I am here in a strange place, with nobody else to love or to speak to, and it is quite natural I should say something to a girl so pretty, and so good, and my own cousin too."

"Say what you please, but do not even think of marrying; the sacrifice will not hurt you *much*, but it would rend your heart to see Emily and her babe in poverty and sickness; besides, though you like Emily very much, yet after all, you do not love her as she ought to be loved, and"—

"I love her too well to *cheat* her,—to *ruin* her," cried Tom, his eyes flashing fire, beneath which for a moment his elder brother shrunk; but the habitual command of James, and the real good temper and general acknowledgment of his power, practised by Tom, added to his humanity, (strongly excited for the situation of one to whom all the family were wont to look up,) soon reconciled them.

James soon removed the bars to his confinement, but

not without a long cavil with the bailiff, as to his personal charges, which he canvassed with that close attention to *pence*, so frequently observable in those who hazard *pounds* without regret, and in their attention to petty savings, indemnify their consciences for risking the property of themselves and others. With the assistance of his brother, he proceeded immediately to the inn, where, in spite of every remonstrance, he placed himself on the outside of a Manchester coach, although the state of his wounded hand was such as to render such travelling exceedingly dangerous and painful.

There was in this greatly erring man the materials for a great, and even worthy character, of much higher stamina, and by no means worse propensities than poor Tom ; James, like him, was lost for want of the due cultivation of his morals and his mind : each wanted a friend in a parent, wise to indulge, and powerful to restrain,—neither had found it.

Emily and her aunt were alike relieved when they found that James was liberated and removed ; the mother rejoiced in what she deemed his safety, and her niece might be said to rejoice in her own, for so terrible was the remembrance of the scene she had suffered, that it had reduced her to the most pitiable state of nervous sensibility, and the very idea of ever seeing him again distressed her. But, alas ! from this time poverty made rapid strides, and want in all its horrors assailed them, whilst they were only calculating in trembling solicitude on its approach,

Condemned early in her married life to be a mere cypher in her family, and forbidden to carry even her maternal cares beyond those of an upper servant, Mrs. Hastings had found in the abstraction of her devotional exercises, employment for a sublime, imaginative mind; and in the various charities she practised, perpetual means of keeping in play the invention and knowledge necessary for effecting her benevolent purposes. Hence, though a very contemplative, yet she was not an idle woman; she had the practice of Lydia "in making garments for the poor," and a considerable portion of that also which belongs to cheap cookery; and at this time she found all the advantage of her knowledge, in managing her own scanty finances.

But, alas! neither her piety nor the cares of her niece could so far control the natural effects of the dreadful change she experienced, and the acute, though suppressed, sorrow she felt, from taking its common course on the constitution when it has turned the meridian of life; she became ill, and, after a fruitless struggle, was obliged to yield, and permit medical assistance, and the purchase of food more congenial to her habits, and suitable for her complaints.

At this juncture Emily could not help regretting that entire seclusion from all her uncle's city connections, which had hitherto been their single consolation. The greatest part, it is true, were probably creditors; but since many even of these had done business with him for many years, and were well aware for how long a period he had merited their respect, as many others

were united with him by the still stronger ties of similar profession in religion, there could be little doubt but they would have accorded to his bereaved wife protection and assistance during his long absence; and when she remembered that many had eaten of his bread, and shared the many conveniences of his once plentiful mansion, who might perhaps be even then near to them and most willing to help them, the sense of their own blameable timidity pressed heavily on her heart. It was, however, in vain to regret, for she was a stranger to all firms and all streets, and without James there was no one that could be visited or addressed, for Tom knew no one beyond the direction of a parcel of game.

As soon as Mrs. Hastings was capable of removal they now became the inhabitants of a single room in Charlton Street, with the hope that in London plain sewing might at least be procured; and Emily hoped also to dispose of the contents of her portfolio, which was abundantly stocked with views of the country they had left, for as it was seldom that her uncle permitted music drawing had been her principal employment, and one in which she had made great progress.

The hope of procuring sewing having been soon quashed from the mistress of the house, who assured them "that all the sempstresses she knew were ruined by the charity schools," this resource was rendered the more important, and Emily, on Tom's arrival, eagerly besought him to take the portfolio and endeavour to dispose of the contents.

"Me carry this thing like old Woodridge, the draw-

ing-master, through London streets ! Dear Emily, I could die first ! I would as soon turn tinker, and stop with my wheel at every old woman's door, crying 'Kettles to mend ! knives to grind !' What would people think ?"

"They would pay you the compliment to think you an artist ; there are many in London who carry such things every day."

"Why, it is true I have seen them, but never any tall, stout fellows like me ; besides, what could I say ? I know no more of the things inside than the Pope of Rome ; no, don't ask me to do this, I would sell Sancho rather than that."

"It is ever thus, my dear cousin, with you, every day you are determined to do something, but that which you will do or can do never arrives ; but I will say no more, I shall go myself, for I must have some chocolate before my aunt awakes, and you know I have nothing left to dispose of."

Emily, recruited perhaps by the little anger thus raised, set out, and Tom, not to be behind with her in exertion, actually went into Holborn and sold his darling Sancho ; when they met again, though each was suffering, and especially Tom, yet the consciousness of having done well, and procured relief for her who was alike the object of their tenderness, irradiated their countenances, and Emily was even eloquent in her praise of the resolution Tom had evinced, which, she observed, "was but the prelude to higher exertions, she was certain."

"Thank you, Emily, thank you ; this is the first time

I was ever praised in my own family, out of it I have had more than enough, but that was for keeping dogs, not parting with them ; had I had less praise for being a good shot, I should have deserved more for being a good son ; or if my father would have allowed me any merit for my obedience, why then I would with pleasure have extended it ; but no, do what I would, good or bad, a long speech about corrupt nature was the end of everything, followed by a groan that seemed to blow me away from him as if I were a noxious insect or a venomous reptile."

"Don't say so, your father was very generous to you."

"True, he gave me a purse full of money, and strict orders never to spend it in the only way I liked, that is well thought on ; now, Emily, I'll treat you to the play, since James went I have been three times, and, poor as we are, I have a right to take you with my Sancho's money."

This was, however, declined, for though Emily would have liked to see a play in London she could not bring herself to leave her aunt, especially when, on rising, she learnt how tenderly her beloved children had been acting ; nor did she withhold praise of her son, and what was even dearer to him, of the animal from which he had torn himself, and concerning whose future fate he could not forbear to torment himself with increasing solicitude till evening, when he retired to comfort or forget his anxiety by seeing the latter part of the play.

A few more drawings were sold, and, with other aids from the wardrobe of the ladies, kept out the wolf until

Tom arrived at the period when he could, according to his own conclusion, demand his legacy ; but, to his extreme disappointment, he was informed that some litigation having arisen respecting the property of the testator, the payment of all legacies was suspended, and it was uncertain when it would be received.

As the drowning man, when deprived of all hope from a probable succour, grasps eagerly at the slightest reed, so intensely had the family clung to this wreck that the shock received by this information was scarcely less severe than that which deprived them of their all ; and it was increased on receiving a most melancholy though extremely short letter from James, informing them, " that, after suffering in the most dreadful manner from the wound in his hand, he was at last obliged to submit to amputation, and beseeching Tom to furnish him with the means of defraying his expenses, as by this time he would doubtless have obtained them."

This letter being happily addressed to the young man the poor mother was spared her share of the affliction it was so calculated to awaken, and Emily eagerly concerted how best to relieve the distress without consulting her, and thereby leading her to make inquiries as to the cause, which it would be difficult to answer and impossible to reveal. One only, one dear, invaluable treasure remained to Emily—the gold repeater of her mother, which she had long determined never to part with, she laid it down upon the table, and, looking at Tom, observed, "*I have now no other way, take this and try to sell it.*"

Tom instinctively took out his own; it was a silver hunting-watch, and of an ordinary description, and whilst he compared the two, and truly asserted that he could get nothing for his own worth sending to his brother, they were interrupted by the person with whom they had formerly lodged, who brought a letter for Emily, which being, she said, a double one, she did not choose either to return to the postman or send by any other messenger.

In eager haste Emily opened the letter, whilst her cousin paid for it, and almost started at the sight of two bills, but the name of Stanton at the bottom of the short letter, which announced them as the interest money he was indebted to her, instantly checked the flutter of joy which was throbbing at her heart, and she suddenly thrust them out of her sight and urged Tom to expedition in his painful errand. As soon as he was gone she procured a sheet of paper, and, with a hand nearly illegible from trepidation, wrote a letter inclosing them to the widow, which she immediately carried herself to the post-office, not allowing herself, as it were, a moment's breathing time ere she had removed the temptation of retaining them from her sight, being anxious to save others from experiencing the agonizing sensations which possessed her own bosom during an hour so critical.

She had just hurried through this painful business, and was weeping through the flutter of her spirits and the gratitude of her heart to that God whom she felt as her especial preserver, when Tom returned; he had sold the watch, he had revolved the situation of his

brother, and earnestly desired to carry him relief; but he confessed that he had also had the offer of some employment, which, in their present sad state, it was desirable he should insure, and which would inevitably be given to another if not instantly accepted.

"Then please do take it," cried Emily, "and I will add the expenses of your journey to the money I intended for James, which will do him more good than seeing you could possibly do, you know he has many friends about him, and they will surely assist him."

Her advice was taken, her gift dispatched, after which she mentioned so much of the transactions of the day as were necessary to her aunt, who warmly approved her conduct, spoke with confidence of the relief which God in his providence would not fail soon to provide, and declared she was herself so much better as to be capable of undertaking anything in her power; and in the calm complacency she displayed, the exalted faith and holy resignation with which she seemed endued from above, Emily felt her own spirits composed, and her strength revived.

But, alas! though Tom secured his employment, as it was only for a few hours in the day, it was only help and not subsistence, and it required a decent appearance, made with great difficulty in the present state of his wardrobe. The talents, and even the incessant toil of Emily, could ill supply the bare necessities demanded by the family, even when she was able to part with her productions; but in her great anxiety to do much she ceased to do justice to her own powers, and to her bitter

grief the honest, generous efforts of her love and industry failed in their object, and after many days of incessant toil she was unable to sell a single drawing.

Returning with lingering steps to her wretched abode she sat down with an expression of hopeless dejection on her countenance, which indicated that stupor of sorrow which is the prelude either to sickness or insanity ; and she felt as if the powers of body and mind were alike failing her, and in reply to the tender inquiries of her aunt, she could only look towards the folio, shake her head, and observe, " They are all here, every one of them."

" But they will not be there always, my child ; besides, though the almond-tree cease to flourish, and the olive-tree fail, we will still trust in Him in whose hands are the issues of life."

" Dear aunt, I have not your faith : I dare not hope for a miracle in my favour ; but I will make one,—*one* effort more ; I will write to some of your old neighbours. How many of them 'have bread and to spare,' who owe it all to you ! Since working will not help me, begging perhaps may."

" Rather, my dear, write to your father's brother ; for he is very rich, and owes it to that father's forbearance. How singular it seems that we should never have thought of this before ! I believe it is the immediate suggestion of the divine Spirit in this our extreme distress. Write, my love, instantly."

Emily rose, but her head swam. She had taken no food that morning, and it was now high noon,—the last

cup of coffee in the house had been carried by her to her aunt, before she set out on her sad and fruitless expedition. She had no money, and was three weeks in arrear for her lodgings ; and the mistress of the house, who kept a little chandler's shop, had already told her by looks but too intelligent, that she must not lengthen her account, and commented in no pleasant tones on the sick looks of the old lady, and the "wickedness of pretending to be better, and all the time looking like dead corpses ; or, very like, really dying in honest people's houses, and bringing trouble upon them ;" so that she durst not encounter her, even to ask for one of the stale loaves which decorated her dirty window.

The voice of this person on the stairs in no pleasant tone completed the overthrow of Emily, who sunk shivering into the nearest chair, as the landlady burst into the room with a weighty hamper in her arms ; crying, "Here's a pretty concern, truly ! If he as brings it hasn't the impudence to ax three shillings and fourpence, ven all the time there's carriage paid written on the lid !"

"It have gone to Bedford Square, and then up to Hampstead Road," bawled a rough voice behind her.

"It is all right ; give the man his money, and I will pay you thankfully," said Mrs. Hastings.

The woman was about to exclaim more vehemently against "some folk's assurance," but a glance at the hamper reassured her ; and she complied with the request, returning down stairs for that purpose.

The moment the door was closed, Mrs. Hastings fell

upon her knees, and in a strain of devout thanksgiving, praised God for a gift which she received as immediately sent by him,—as the manna that fell from heaven to nourish his famishing people.

Emily at this moment saw all around her as one but half awake, and incapable of assisting the feeble but active relative who now exerted herself to unpack the contents, and sunk from the rapturous gratitude of adoration to a sense of the sweet and simple thankfulness of a tender heart, as she perused the following sheet which lay open at the top ;—

“ONNERRED MADAM,

“We hops you will please to except a baskett of Crismas cheer, as all yere pore niburs as bin proud to put in: theer founs is of the breed you givd Sally Johnson, and the pork is your own pig to John Benson, and the butter is wife's churning from the brown cow as you remember when she was a cafe; also, because they say coles is dere in London, we sends some shooting stockings for Mr. Tummus, seeing as how the Lord has removed the rest of the famley to forrin parts, as we hears; and also socks for you an Miss. We don't go for to deny we have hard bad news enuff, and many's the time we all wish you was down among us, while the squire is away, as a clean corner and a kind hart would be a comfort even to a grand lady so humbel as you; and we hops you will pardon us, seeing we meen no offensa, in that stocking foot as is at the bottom, also the written buks that you lent Mrs. Allen, who is departed in great peace, and loved you to the last as a dere sister. The likes of you we never must hop to see, no blame to those that follow. The times is not so dear, and trade is pretty good, so that please to send again for tings, if so be this is agreebel.

“It was Nelly that did the cap same as Miss taught her, and she and all of us send our duty to you and Miss, and Mr. Tummus—God bless his hansom face, and turn him in the right road, in such a wicked place as Lonon is. Every on o the

childer will needs put summit in, thof it be but holly berries ; please to excuse them same as you used to do. Nancy Haskins as got a fine boy, and calls it James ; but she had no codle this time. Old John is creaking yet, but he sticks to the stuff you giv'd him, and has sent you two cabbage nets ; so no more my dere mistress that we all pray for constantly, I ham your most dutiful searvant to command.

JONAS TIME."

When Emily had swallowed a little cowslip wine and a mouthful of seed-cake taken from the hamper, she too could read the letter and weep over it ; again open her eyes to life, dreary as the prospect was, and say, "that while it produces one act of genuine love, one tie that links us to our kind, its evils may be endured."

Tom, of whom they saw very little of late, fortunately came in at this moment and partook the exquisite pleasure they experienced in a double sense, from this humble, but useful proof of gratitude and attachment, in those lowly neighbours, amongst whom the holiday hours of his boyhood had passed. With all the eagerness of curiosity, he rummaged among the straw, and having dislodged fowls, pork, bacon, butter, stockings, and oat-cakes, at length reached the depository spoken of ; which contained, in many shillings and sixpences, and a few half-crowns, between two and three pounds, supposed undoubtedly to be the means of removing Mrs. Hastings from London to her own country.

As Tom emptied this treasure into his mother's lap, and Emily felt in it the full value of that pure affection which had dictated the joint collection of many weeks, and the product of many a toilsome hour ; when she looked at the tranquil, but withered face, whose fine

features at fifty bore the lines of threescore and ten, she could not forbear to wish that she were indeed with the humble friends of her past days, especially as it would place her in the way of many who had probably not less the will, and infinitely more the power to benefit her, and were probably now suffering pain in abstaining from the offers of friendship her case demanded, but her delicacy had hitherto shrunk from. Whilst these thoughts were passing in her mind, Mrs. Hastings was herself eagerly employed in examining the manuscript written by herself and lent to a sickly person in her vicinity, many years before, and which she now looked over with an avidity that proved it an object of unusual interest; and when at length they called her attention to the power of her removal, she immediately answered, "that although her poor old 'neighbours' kind offer was indeed a cordial to her heart, yet she should not for a moment think of laying such a burden upon them; in fact, she would rather die with Emily than live anywhere without her;" and on perceiving a tear in Emily's eye on this declaration, added with a smile, "I really think I have discovered in this the means of helping us all. I will turn author and publish it—wish me success—or rather, ask for it from Him who alone can prosper it."

Emily replied by a faint smile, and a tender pressure of the hand, and then proposed immediately to pay for their lodgings—after which, she would cook some of the meat for the dinner they all required.

Tom protested that he would do both, and he was as

good as his word ; for he perceived the extreme debility to which Emily was reduced ; and although it was true, as James had asserted, "that he could not love her as she deserved to be loved," nor even perhaps as he, with his deficient perceptions, was capable of loving, yet it was certain that he bore towards her a kind and tender heart, and a perfectness of esteem which admitted no increase.

In the course of their meal, he informed them that he now lodged with a decent woman in Westminster, who had a chamber to spare, which enjoyed the extraordinary merit of looking into the green fields, and could not fail to be far better for them both than their present abode. Mrs. Hastings scarcely suffered him to proceed, before she expressed a desire to go thither, saying, "that in the calmness of the country she could revise her work, and render it, she trusted, really valuable ;" and even poor Emily, whose pride of usefulness had been so grievously mortified in the morning, thought that with something like the view of nature before her, though it was yet winter, she should again be able to draw to a good purpose. Both parties were still further led to adopt the change, because they learned that the house was occupied by an old man, whose worthy daughter assisted him in maintaining two orphan grandchildren, to whom their little aid would be serviceable.

Again, therefore, they removed, and to a lodging in appearance more humble than the last ; but it had the cleanliness and quietness so soothing to the aching

head and harassed heart, and was more especially valued by Mrs. Hastings, as promising Tom's society, which, though singularly uncongenial with her own, was rendered, by the happy alchemy of maternal love, always inoffensive, and frequently amusing to her.

In fact, she was so truly "in charity with all men," that however rigid in her observance of the strictest self-discipline and self-renunciation, she yet never exacted from another the same measure she meted to herself; ever conceiving and allowing, that there are, in the various pursuits of various characters, so many distinct perceptions of what is good and evil, that except in positive crimes, and exemplary virtues, it is difficult for one man to judge for another. A pitying observation, a hope of future amendment, a silent prayer for the offender, was all she uttered relative to those errors in her brethren which were evident—imputed ones she never listened to: when forced upon her, they raised the only hectic anger could kindle on her cheek; and she would then indignantly exclaim, "Who art thou, that judgest thy neighbour? to his own master he standeth or falleth."

It was now the period when letters might be expected from Mr. Hastings; and but for the solicitude with which they were desired, our poor and humble family might have sat down to their slender portion, with somewhat of that cheerfulness which to a certain degree all of them assumed. The employment of poor Tom was connected with a neighbouring wharf, and for a short time he brought his little earnings to his mother

with great pleasure; but unhappily he gained companions who encroached upon his time and his profits, for having no taste for intellectual pursuits, he could not spend his leisure with women; and it was a real disadvantage, that he was no longer compelled to walk a long way to pay the tribute his affection demanded. Emily saw with deep concern that the simplicity of his heart and manners received a taint from the people with whom he perhaps inevitably associated, and she dreaded lest poverty should become the parent of that infamy which is its only indelible stain. There were moments when she could have wept over him, have entreated him with all the fondness of the tenderest sister to guard himself; but there was a new expression in his eye which restrained her—she felt that her intentions would be mistaken, her fears ridiculed, and she forbore to provoke the anger which might insult, or the love which might annoy her; but the consciousness of her own helpless dependence ceased not a moment to harass her. In pursuing the means of mitigating their poverty by incessant and various exertion, she alone obtained any respite from her sense of present difficulties and future distress.

Whilst Emily now plied alternately the needle or the pencil, for their support, Mrs. Hastings, with not less diligence, revised and re-wrote the manuscript of which we spoke, finding, like every one engaging in similar pursuits, some sentence which could be amended, or some conclusion which might be strengthened; and as the work was less a literary effort than a conscien-

tious endeavour to do good, yet pursued by a discriminating taste as well as a religious mind, it was no wonder that even with much and anxious labour, little was comparatively effected, and that the reading of the evening only prepared for the new occupation of the following morning.

As long as Emily could procure the slender portion of food they required, and the more substantial breakfast for Tom, with those little aids of medicine still necessary for her aunt, she cared not how long this occupation lasted, since it absorbed the mind of Mrs. Hastings much, and rendered the long absences of her son unheeded ; but as the period approached when their little rent must be paid, she began to cast an anxious eye towards it, especially when the arrival of a foreign letter with a great accumulation of postages, drew the last sixpence from the general purse.

This letter satisfied the family of the personal safety of its head ; but having been written a long time, was not able to give any account of his success, further than the hope that he should find a market for his goods in the district whither he was hastening.

Thankful even for this, Mrs. Hastings now really closed her labours ; and notwithstanding her natural modesty and real humility, ventured to predict "that it would soon answer in every sense a most beneficial purpose, if either of her dear children would dispose of the MSS., which she had understood might be soon done in the city.

Emily had been long aware that this task must de-

volve upon her ; and though she felt it to be a hard one, she was conscious that it was much easier to present the works of another than her own, to which nothing less than the extreme of want could have driven her in the first instance. The same circumstances again operated ; and when she looked at the calm, sweet countenance of her aunt, or listened to the returning cough and short breathings which indicated disease (never complained of, but evidently felt), so far from speaking of reluctance to obey her wishes, Emily felt as if no enterprise was too great for her to undertake, no suffering too acute for her to bear, in such a cause. Having, therefore, arranged all her little wants, provided her medicines, and desired one of the children of the family to attend upon her—after twice returning to take, and give a farewell kiss, and hear the “God speed you, my love,” which was ever, with her, accompanied with that fervent aspiration of faith, which indeed lifts the soul to heaven to receive a present blessing, she bent her steps, in anxious expectation, to the principal house in the great emporium of literary merchandise.

Emily bore her walk pretty well, considering the close confinement and unequal sustenance to which she had been long confined ; but when she actually entered the open door, and addressed the first person she saw, her heart throbbed so violently that she could scarcely be understood, and it was most happy for her that she was conducted to an inner room, furnished with a seat, and left alone for some time, during which the object

of her errand was placed in the hands of one of the partners of the house.

After a short period of most welcome solitude and recomposure, this gentleman appeared ; and in the suavity, and even kindness of his manners, made her some atonement for the disappointment of learning that the production in question did not suit him, as "not being of a description usually published by that house."

Emily considered the last words as being used for the purpose of softening refusal,—the courtesy this implied encouraged her to inquire, "if he would have the goodness to mention any person likely to purchase it."

"The very respectable house of —— in Piccadilly, I should think very likely."

Emily, with a silent courtesy, departed. She knew Piccadilly was a long way from thence, and she was already dreadfully wearied ; but as she recollected seeing the name of the very person mentioned in conjunction with numerous charities, and recollected how often in better days she had heard it mentioned by the visitants at her uncle's, her spirits gained a spring by feeling as if she could scarcely fail to find a friend, who would be the means of certain relief to a person situated like Mrs. Hastings, who united to those wants which are the first recommendations to humanity, that character which renders her offices doubly delightful.

But so long and wearisome was this journey, that she was compelled to take a considerable rest upon the road at the house in Rathbone Place, where she had

been wont to dispose of her drawings, and where she looked so poorly, that she was advised to return home immediately; but as she was still far from home, and a little circuit would accomplish her object, though it was now growing dark, she persisted in going to Piccadilly.

Being now past the usual hours of business, she learnt that the principal was gone into the country, but the title pages and a little of the matter were scanned over by a young person to whom she spoke with an approving eye; and he observed, "that if it could be rendered twice as long, he thought it very probable that Mr. - - would purchase it: at present, it was much too short to answer their purpose."

Emily took the MSS. with a deep sigh; there were many questions she had wished to ask, and even circumstances and sorrows to which she had earnestly desired, and positively determined to advert, had she been so happy as to find Mr. H——; but the "not at home," ruined all her present hopes,—to the young and fashionable-looking person before her it was impossible to speak, wretched and destitute as she was.

Ah, poor Emily,—thou whose first steps were watched with so much solicitude, whose wants were provided with the hand of lavish tenderness,—who shall describe the trembling steps, the sinking heart, the hopeless, helpless despondency of thy soul, during the long and weary way to thy cheerless habitation! Thousands of thy fellow-creatures passed by thee, innumerable lights beamed around thee; but the face of a friend was

unseen by thine eye, the voice of consolation unheard by thy ear. That peopled desert, which of all other wildernesses is the most appalling, surrounded thee, and gave, in its fullest sense, the misery of standing in the wide world *alone!*





VIII.

A Horrible Mistake.

WHEN Emily entered her lodging, the room was dark, save the dying embers which enabled her to see that her aunt was already gone to bed; and she inquired with great solicitude, but in a whisper, "if she had been ill during her absence?"

"Why, no, Miss, not to say *ill*; for she wrote a letter, and sent me with it to the post-office; but when I came back, she said as how she had a pain in her side and would like to lie down; and it struck me as how she was pining ater you, for she sithed sadly as she looked at the window. Howsomever I let down the bed, and she laid down; and when the gentleman came, I got them some tea, and she seemed to be almost well again; and afore he left madam he gived her some physic, as was in the cupboard, and went away, and she fell asleep; but she does give such sobs, so oddly you can't think."

By this time Emily had lit a candle; and shading it with her hand, she approached the bed to see whether she really slept.

The hands of Mrs. Hastings were thrown out and clasped together as if in prayer, but the placid expression of countenance so usual with her was gone:—her features had even the appearance of recent convulsion; and thick coming, low sobs, burst from her breast, while a cold dew was gathered in drops upon her brow. Emily raised her head with her arm, on which she opened her eyes, and in a few moments gazed upon her with her usual benignity, and made an effort to speak; but the words she would have uttered died upon her lips,—her eyes closed, and again her powers of respiration became laboured and alarming.

In great astonishment and distress, Emily bade the little girl fetch her sister, who was a woman of sense and experience, and who immediately obeyed the summons.

On seeing the invalid she observed, “that surely the lady had taken something improper,—she feared the child had done something wrong.”

“I did nothing but give the two little bottles to the young gentleman, and he poured one into a cup, and she drank it in a moment; and here stands the other.”

Emily perceived, with a horror that froze her blood, that the bottle which remained was a small draught generally taken at bed-time; the bottle emptied was one of drops, usually taken to soothe the cough, and compose the irritability of her system.

As soon as it was possible, this person procured a medical gentleman, to whom she imparted the circum-

stances that had arisen ; but immediately on seeing the invalid, he declared that all was over : and the only consolation he could bestow was an assurance that the expiring patient was free from suffering.

When this sentence was pronounced, Emily heard it with a sensation of horror which seemed to throw all the faculties of her mind into profound stupor, and in the intensity of sorrow to destroy perception ; but the first movement of the patient—the deep sound of her labouring breath,—the dull glances of her eyes, as from time to time they half opened, and then quickly closed again,—all recalled in its most vivid sense the bitter agony, the lively affection, the entire veneration she felt ; and throwing herself beside her on the bed, she poured forth her grief in lamentations, which only ceased with exhaustion—for, alas ! she was not called on to suppress it.

Hour after hour passed, and Tom returned not—nor did any change serve to vary the regular approach of the king of terrors. In vain was the slowly stiffening form clasped to a bosom almost as cold—in vain were the departed senses addressed by the tenderest appeals to recognition—no effort recalled perception, nor happily did any indication of suffering disturb the calm within ; and the gentle and purified spirit at length took its eternal flight, without marking the moment of its departure.

But as hope exists even in the midst of every motive to despair, when at last there was neither breath nor pulse, when again and again Emily had heard the as-

surance, "that all was over," she then found that the grief already insupportable admitted increase, and she sunk on the bed in the happy oblivion of a swoon, apparently as dead as her whom she lamented.

It was now about six o'clock, and the mistress of the house, who had from pure compassion remained with Emily, and was really in great distress from her present situation, at this moment heard Tom returning home. She had long known of his irregularity, but was attached to him from the frankness of his manners, and sincerely wished him well; and it instantly struck her that the awful and heart-rending spectacle before her was calculated to produce good effects, and with blameable and cruel precipitation, she hastily led him into the immediate presence of this sudden and twofold affliction.

To behold a mother always tenderly beloved thus suddenly snatched away—to see Emily lie by her lifeless, as if killed by the stroke—so overcame the wretched young man, already a sufferer, that he appeared to be seized with sudden madness, and in his frightful ravings repaid with terror the unwise experiment made on his feelings; but Emily revived to sense and sorrow from the sound of his voice, and the pains now taken to convince him that she at least was yet living, somewhat restored his senses.

The moment that the poor girl was able to comprehend that there was another human being near her as wretched as herself—that Tom, the fondly beloved, the youngest darling of his mother, was bending over that

mother's corpse in agony—weak and exhausted as she was, and according to her own ideas, trembling on the brink of the grave, she roused herself to reassure and soothe him under the dreadful circumstance which must inevitably give to his grief a pang beyond her own.

But she spoke with more than wonted kindness and he answered not; she even took his hand and pressed it between her own, but the pressure was not returned. His eyes were fixed alone upon his mother, and the voice which had lately almost howled in the wildness and astonishment of its grief was now seized as with the stupor of idiocy; and the terrific recollections of his own hurried attentions and their probable consequences increased the acuteness of his feelings beyond the power of his reason.

“O God of mercy!” cried Emily, falling on her knees as she still held his cold and motionless hand, “have mercy upon him—have mercy upon him! It was the last prayer of *her* lips—the last breathing of *her* devout heart. O God of mercy, hear *her* prayer!—she was indeed thy servant.”

Tom gave a deep sigh, and clapping his hand on his forehead, seemed trying to recall his senses. He sat down by the bed-side. The attendant had now thrown a handkerchief over the face of the corpse, but the left hand still lay extended on the bed. He took that hand, and clasped it between his own. The thinness—the pressure of the ring, recalled the memory of her long sufferings, her husband's absence, her many privations,

her late labours, her unceasing goodness,—all by degrees came back, like the images of a forgotten dream.

With them again came sorrow,—heart-rending, but salutary sorrow. His frame was shaken, tears poured down his cheeks, but memory and sanity returned, and in her sense of relief on this account, Emily learnt that there was even in her desolate situation the power of being more desolate. Such, however, was the severity of the present affliction, aided by previous fatigue and long fasting, that she became seriously ill, and fell into frequent swoonings the whole of the following day, during which time her cousin never left the house, although she was too ill to see him, and now shared the chamber of the poor woman to whose compassion she was indebted for all the little help she received in this severe affliction.

During the whole day poor Tom remained in the house, and never quitted the humble apartment where lay the remains of her who had ever been his dearest parent, and had long been considered his only one. Late in the evening he again went out, but the circumstance was not mentioned to Emily; who, after a long day of sad reflection and severe sufferings, both mental and bodily, had at length sunk into uneasy slumber.

Perhaps there are few sensations to which the human mind is subject, so complicated and distressing (and, alas! how many can sympathize with them) as those which pour in upon the mind when we awaken from the temporary oblivion of our sorrow to recall the memory of a loss like this of our unhappy orphan. The

exalted sanctity, the pure, high character of the deceased, had been so united with perfect sweetness of temper, child-like simplicity of manners, and that richness of imagination, which, even where it may lead to error, never fails to interest, by displaying the powers of the mind and the affections of the heart, that no one ever knew her intimately without loving her tenderly even as she loved them. What then must have been the closeness of that tie which existed betwixt her and her orphan niece, whose disposition, and even person, had so greatly resembled hers that she had been generally considered as her daughter. This dear aunt—her unbounded affection—her singular excellences—her sufferings, endured with such calm fortitude, such religious heroism, and her awful departure—the chasm it had left—all—*all* broke on the memory of Emily; and she started at the view of her own misery like one who wakes on the brink of a precipice, or perceives the yawning fissure of an earthquake opening at his feet.

It was now dawn, and Emily left the side of her sleeping companion, and huddling on her clothes, entered with silent steps the chamber of death. The struggles of expiring nature were no longer heard, yet were they almost expected still to wound her ear, so deep had been their impression; and with a terrible eagerness that yet dreaded to satisfy its indefinite feelings, she eagerly gazed on the face which till now had ever met her with a smile.

The features were now perfectly placid, and gave evidence that death had been painless in the awful and

unexpected seizure of his victim ; and Emily felt even now a full conviction that for the departed it was indeed a change most blessed, and although effected by means the most heart-rending, was to *her* a removal far more to be desired than any mode by which weak human reason would have prescribed its own deliverance from the burden of existence. She had not languished for the aids of art, nor the comforts of life ; she had not pined for her banished husband, her distant son ; pain had not racked her, hope had not deserted her ; the very draught of death was presented by that beloved child, of whose carelessness she was unconscious, but with whose attentions she was happy, and whom she thanked and blessed for the awful boon he presented.

Whilst these ameliorating thoughts stole over the sad tide of grief which deluged the bosom of Emily, she became conscious (inexperienced as she was) that a change was taking place, which called for that immediate attention she alone was likely to pay. The memory of her dear mother, and all the consolatory circumstances which then attended her, rushed upon her mind ; and the terrible contrast her present situation offered again opened all the sluices of grief, and added the pangs of the past to the pressure of the present.

But Emily, solitary as was her situation, could not be permitted long to weep. In the abode of poverty even the most attached mourner is compelled to yield to stern necessity, and expedite the removal of that

beloved form, to which it clings even in death;* and Emily was called upon not only to bury her aunt, her only friend, but to consider on the means of doing it.

"There are several people who have known us, and would help us a little at such a time as this, even if my uncle is already their debtor. I must get poor Tom to search them out immediately: there is no other way for us now, but it is fully justifiable. I have written in vain to Mr. Shelburne, besides, he is too far from us: we must have help this very day."

As Emily thus reasoned she moved towards the door of that adjoining closet where she believed her cousin still slept, but she was prevented from tapping by hearing his steps as he rushed up the stairs, and suddenly appeared before her.

If the countenance of this young man had on the preceding morning terrified her by the expression of distraction and sorrow which it then assumed, she was little less hurt at the smile with which he greeted her now, for it was neither that of brotherly love, nor even of pleasure, but flitted over features full of deep sorrow with a sort of momentary and indignant exultation, like a gleam of lightning in a wintry sky.

"Emily, are you already up?"

"Yes, and I wanted to see you much: we have a sad duty to perform."

* Perhaps the author of the unequalled Scottish stories never gave a more decided nor affecting view of nature in humble life than when he shows us the truly heart-stricken father mending his boat after the funeral of his son; he had no time to weep.—*Vide* "Antiquary."

"I know it—I know it all—and I have for once done my best to save you, my poor girl. I am just come from the undertaker's, who will be here immediately. Here, Emily, here is the money; take it, I beseech you."

As Tom spoke he drew from his pocket several pound notes and a large quantity of silver, all of which he pushed towards her with the air of one who loathes what he touches, and is suffering, not less from sorrow than from guilt—from a concealment more severe than even his apparent cause of sorrow justified, great as it was.

"Where—where did you get this money? You have been out all night:—tell me, I conjure you, tell me. Surely—"

"I brought it from *hell*, Emily—nay, do not start in such terror. If I have wrung it from devils it is for the use of an angel—what could I do?"

Emily, sinking on the nearest chair, could only articulate, "I know not what you mean."

"My dear Emily, bear up, I beseech you. The money is fairly mine; I won it—won it at the place where I of late lost all my earnings—at the place where, in my hurry to attend, I poured out that cursed draught which has rendered us both motherless. These places are called hells, and they well deserve the name, for fiends alone inhabit them."

"And could you, Tom, go there last night?"

"Yes, Emily, I could, for I *did* go; but under such agony of soul as you cannot judge, I went to play my

last stake for a coffin for my own mother—a mother that died by my hand—a mother to whom I was perhaps a bad son, but for whom I could have endured—whom I loved—”

He burst at this moment again into a flood of even hysterical sorrow, and casting himself prostrate on the bed, exhibited such sincere and bitter grief, that Emily could only see in him an object of the utmost compassion, led astray by circumstances, and but little defended by natural or acquired strength, but alive to the purest affections and the bitterest remorse. As soon as she could prevail upon him to listen to her, she endeavoured to soothe his mind, to impress upon him the value of his mother's character, in the firmness and patience she had evinced, and prevail upon him henceforward to follow her example, to be worthy of such a mother.

“I *have* determined—even before I went, I made a vow to *her* upon my knees, that I would go no more, save this single time, and you see how I was heard, Emily:—my prayer (sinner as I am) was answered; I obtained the power to fulfil my last duties to her.”

Emily trembled to observe how nearly superstition and guilt may be leagued to mislead the weak; and she earnestly endeavoured to prove how much rather his success was likely to arise from associates who wished to inveigle him still further, than as the answer of Heaven even to a good resolution. She was interrupted in her pious task by the arrival of the coffin; and Tom, sick with agitation, remorse, and sorrow, retired to seek repose.

It was difficult for Emily even to expend in bare necessities money which she considered in some sort nefariously obtained; and as soon as she had the power of holding a pen, she scrawled a few almost illegible lines to a gentleman in the city, whom she had seen at her uncle's house in the country; which she committed to the care of the old man who was the master of the house, and had the sense to search for his abode in the Directory of a neighbouring tradesman. At this period her sense of anguish was so quickened by that of guilt in poor Tom's conduct, that she felt as if she had reached the *acmé* of suffering, and had the right of supremacy in misfortune, to call on the wide world for help. Alas! fever was in her veins: her aching, throbbing head became incapable of enduring more; and she was again obliged to return to her lonely garret, and there await that relief which she now conceived could be only found in the grave.

It so happened that the medical gentleman who had been called to her aunt looked in during this day, to learn the result of the unfortunate accident as to the *time* of the patient's death, and desiring to see Emily, was conducted to her apartment. Happily, his report of her ill health precluded her from enduring the additional pain of being called before the coroner, now sitting; and his humanity prescribed those medicinal aids required by her distressing situation. For some days, low delirium, or helpless stupor, the consequence of intense and overwrought sensibility, saved her from further suffering, or relieved by varying the nature of

"Not of late, certainly," said Emily, with a sickly smile ; "nor should I in your father's house ever have loved pleasure so well as to have risked his anger, or your mother's pain, by even naming such things ; but my acquiescence would have been that of obedience, not principle, for I really believe there is no more sin in taking a dance than in eating a dinner ; both may be made alike the means of doing it, as I have often witnessed at our plentiful table in the country, when otherwise good people were guilty of gluttony and epicurism very frequently."

"I have seen that myself many a time," said Tom, "certainly ; and don't you remember, Emily, when Mr. M——r prayed that my dogs might drop down dead (poor Sancho was one of them), and my new gun miss fire, he nevertheless took all the partridges home in his pocket."

"True, Tom, we have all our weak places ; but I presume to censure no one ; and were I to be placed with a pious family, should be happy to observe their rules, and thankful for sharing their devotions, and partaking, so far as I was able, their faith ; but I would not for the whole world affect that which I do not feel. I am too sincerely a Christian to be a hypocrite ; and I know, also, that with all my misfortunes, my losses, and with that desire to die which even yet hangs upon my heart, and that humble hope of eternal happiness which is my only comfort, I am not in that state of grace, that exemption from worldly-mindedness, which is expected from those who profess to be what is now understood by the term *serious*."

"But all that will come to you, Emily ; if it comes to me, who have been so far out of the right road, it will surely visit you. At all events, I must take you hence : you are surrounded by dangers, of which your innocence can form no idea : there is a man, a wicked man, the very wretch who first won my money, and then suffered me to win his, purely for your sake—he haunts this place, and will know the first moment you go out ; and should he speak to you, he is so plausible, so elegant, he will deceive you, as he deceived me, for he appears all friendliness and goodness."

Emily shook her head in unbelief, but professed an earnest desire of removing as soon as she could ; and when her cousin was gone, the deplorable dependence of her situation, the want of that dear friend whose presence was her protection, the loss of fortune which seemed confirmed by time, the silence both of James and her uncle, and the total, the irreparable, the incomprehensible loss of him to whom she had once looked as more dear, and more stable, than all the other gifts of Heaven, again pressed upon her spirits, with an effect less violent, but more saddening than ever ; and in reviewing the conversation she had held with Tom, she could not forbear to think how unnecessary it was to deny the innocent amusements of life to one so little likely either to partake or desire them,—whose heart seemed closed to every sense save that of regret, and whom misfortune "had shorn even to the quick," in love, friendship, and fortune.



IX.

Sudden Change of Circumstances.

AWARE that she was now supported rather by the charity of Tom's friends than any exertions he could as yet be making for her himself, poor Emily, in the earliest period of her convalescence, resumed her labours ; and when desired by her medical attendant to desist from drawing, on account of the weakness she still experienced, replied by saying, "she wished it were in her power to procure some muslin work ; one or the other she *must now endeavour* to do."

Mr. Turner understood the *must*, and pitied the *endeavour* ; he was a kind-hearted, liberal man, and sincerely wished to assist the object of his cares, for which purpose he meant to consult with his wife ; but as he was for the present silent, and departed sooner than usual, Emily felt afraid that "he was afraid of her poverty." While she was musing on the difficulties of her situation, the important letter arrived, which reminded her of her age, her poverty, and her duties, by conveying to her the interest money she held so sacred, but which she now wanted so cruelly.

"When I received these bills before," said Emily to

herself, "*she* lived, whose necessities might almost have excused me for infringing on them ; but she is gone, and I know my own duty and her wishes—yet I am in debt, and have no means of payment : what is my duty in such a case as this ?"

A few minutes decided—she wrote with the bills to Mrs. Hastings, the widow, mentioning the death of her aunt, the difficulties of her situation, and requesting the gift of as much money as she could spare, observing, "that in a case of such great family distress as that which had involved them all, mutual assistance could be asked without a blush."

Yet it is certain that Emily both blushed and sighed, as she sent this letter on its speedy errand, although she felt that she could receive the assistance it entreated without degradation ; and in the full assurance of gaining it, she ventured to despatch a note to Mr. Turner, requesting the account, which she yet trembled to receive, more especially as it was several days since she had seen her cousin ; and there were other trifling claims which lay heavy at her heart.

The following morning, when Mr. Turner's foot was heard on the stairs, her confusion and distress were excessive, more especially as in entering, he held a letter of large dimensions in his hand, which he presented to her the moment of his entrance.

"Yes, sir—I doubt not it is very right ; and soon, very soon, I hope to be able to—"

"To open it, my dear young lady ;—I took it from the hands of a footman who waits below."

The caution of poor Tom against some unknown stranger, changed the flutter she had lately felt to a different object, and in great eagerness she exclaimed,—

“It is not for me—it cannot be ; I will open no letters : I beseech you, sir, to return it.”

“It is not for you certainly, being directed to the lady you have lost ; but surely it ought to be opened.”

Immediately relieved, Emily seized the letter, well aware she had indeed a melancholy right in all which concerned her departed relative ; and recollecting for the first time that her aunt had been said to have written a letter on the day of her death—many weeks had passed since then—yet surely this must be connected with it. In great agitation she opened and read as follows :—

“DEAR MADAM,—

“I am commissioned by Mr. Shelburne to say he exceedingly laments that his absence from England, for more than a year past, has prevented him from hearing of the painful events of which you write, and will make even his present answer appear to be unkindly delayed. He is now at Nice, in a bad state of health, but entreats you through me to point out in what he can be further serviceable, besides taking your niece, Miss Shelburne, under his immediate protection, yet not so as to divide her unnecessarily from you. I entreat you to consider me as a friend, ready to make every arrangement, both on his behalf and my own, that can add to your comfort, and flatter myself that my little friend Emily remembers me. I enclose a check for fifty pounds, and beg to know whether it will be convenient to receive a call in the morning, from yours, faithfully, &c., &c.

“JULIA HORNBY.”

With heaving bosom and glistening eyes, Emily had

glanced eagerly from the top to the bottom of this letter, and said twice, "Julia Hornby," ere, in the agitation of the moment, she recollected the writer ; but when she did, she pressed it to her heart and her lips, and tears of the purest gratitude to Heaven gushed freely from her eyes ; and putting out her still shaking hand, she exclaimed, "Ah, sir, how much have I to thank you for ! What would have become of me, if I had refused this letter ?"

"Can you make me useful in answering it ? for I am sure you cannot hold a pen."

"Oh, yes !—tell her so ; say what you please, only forget not that I love and thank her," cried Emily ; and placing the letter in his hands, she hastened to throw herself on her knees, and with uplifted hands, and words inarticulate, with overwhelming emotion, to thank and glorify Him who had thus in mercy "looked upon her low estate," and vouchsafed her the help it was alike honourable and happy to receive.

Before the rapt spirit of Emily could return to earth, her kind assistant had dispatched his note and requested to see her, as he was fearful that her fragile frame might be injured by joy, as it had been reduced by sorrow, and thought it really necessary to prescribe ; in doing which, he presented her with a receipt for all demands, which he had generously and delicately prepared before his arrival.

"Oh, sir, you are too good,—but I have *now* money."

"True, and you will want it all, for the lady of Sir Joshua Hornby is very gay, and lives in great style,

and will, under present circumstances, undoubtedly take you immediately home. But I do not seek to make you feel my services painful ; in your portfolio is the means of rendering me your debtor *literally* ; since my daughter is earnestly pursuing the accomplishment you have so successfully studied."

When this liberal and skilful professor was gone, as soon as Emily could sufficiently compose herself, she wrote to poor Tom, entreating him to come to her immediately, and arrange all her affairs ; saying, that she certainly considered him as the sharer of the sum sent by her uncle, since it was in fact given to his mother.

Tom was at this time engaged by their pitying friends, in a department suited to his scanty knowledge, but exhaustless activity, and was really more respectable, and likely to become more happy, than he had ever been before ; but his personal appearance was still so shabby as to depress his spirits, and retard his progress. It will be therefore readily conceived with what joy and thankfulness he heard the news, and received the summons.

So fully did the heart of Emily glow with gratitude towards all who had assisted her in the day of sorrow, and so large appeared her present possessions when compared with the past beggary she had endured, and so little idea could she form of the shabby and forlorn appearance she made, when contrasted with those who move in the world of fashion, that before she had even reflected on the positive necessity of providing herself with a neat suit of mourning, her debts of law, and of

feeling, had reduced her purse to a very slender pittance for such a purpose, and she was making eager and somewhat anxious inquiries on the subject, when a hackney-coach drew up to her humble door, and a handsome gentlemanly person alighted, who desired to speak with Miss Shelburne.

Emily was now too happy to remember her suspicions, and she hastened with eager, though trembling steps, to the stranger, who immediately announced himself as Sir Joshua Hornby ; and who, in doing so, cast upon her a look not less of pity than surprise, followed by one of self-gratulation, as he observed—

“I am commissioned by Lady Hornby to take you back with me, Miss Shelburne ; and as she is now at Richmond, where we have taken a house for the summer, I thought it best to come in a hired carriage : so pray use me like a friend ; order what luggage you please into it, wrap yourself up as you like, and remember only that your companion is an old married man.”

Emily, in the cordiality of this address, felt the flutter of her spirits alleviated, and her timidity reassured ; she had already remembered that Julia Sothoby, the beauty of the village, where she resided with her mother, a gay, good-natured, and accomplished girl, had, on a visit to London, married, in the usual phrase, “exceedingly great,” by becoming the wife of a baronet, whose estates in Dorsetshire lay near the place where Mr. Shelburne resided ; and that through her means her mother had heard of that gentleman several times. The

illness and death of her mother—her long estrangement from the village in question, and since then, the terrible situation in which she had been so long placed, banished all happier traces of past days, but they now returned, bearing pleasant reminiscences of the person, manners, and character of Lady Hornby, which those of her husband seemed to confirm and heighten.

A scanty bundle contained all the worldly possessions of Emily, save her port-folio ; yet words of contention were heard below as to who should place them in the coach ; and “ I cannot do it,” “ I will not do it,” met the ear ; but the sounds were neither loud nor angry. As Emily cast a long, lingering, and almost sorrowful look round the little room where she had suffered so much, and where she had taken an eternal farewell of her best and dearest friend, Sir Joshua stepped down the little staircase, and there saw the folio carried away by the coachman, as three children were all crying at the sight of it ; an aged man stood at the door, bare-headed, “ to pay his last respects to Miss ;” but his decent daughter, unable to speak, was retiring from view.

Emily could only articulate, “ I will come to see you all,” as she stepped into the coach, before she too burst into tears, and continued for some time overwhelmed with an emotion it was difficult to define, and impossible to subdue : her companion did not interrupt her ; he saw clearly that sorrow and sickness had subdued her spirits, and he concluded that she was, in the convenient and common phrase, “ completely nervous.”

When Emily, at length, ventured to look up, they were passing the bridge at Putney, and the sight of the noble Thames and his beautiful shores, decked in the gay livery of early summer, broke upon her senses with all the effect ascribed to enchantment; and as she looked out from her old close bonnet, with looks animated by the scene, Sir Joshua said to himself, "Well, I do think she is as handsome as Lady Hornby described her, but I did not see it till now."

For several miles the scene continued to charm and exhilarate our invalid, but yet the journey was, after so long a confinement, too much for her strength, and she was nearly fainting at the moment when she alighted, and scarcely knew how she found herself in the dressing-room of Lady Hornby, when she had her bonnet taken off, and felt a warm kiss imprinted on her cheek, and a voice was heard to say, "Thank you, my love; you have managed admirably; this is, indeed, poor Mrs. Shelburne's child—but little, *little* did I conceive she could be reduced to this."

Emily lay for some time on a sofa before she had the power to look up at the kind speaker, who was the only person now left in the room; at length she lifted up her eyes, and saw a handsome, elegant, lady-like person, whose features she recollected, but whose general appearance was so much more splendid than anything she had ever seen before, as to be almost appalling to her; she cast her eyes in dismay upon her own habiliments.

"Don't be uneasy about your dress," said Lady

Hornby ; "when you find yourself able to rise, I think, as we are nearly of a height, that matter may be managed ; for I was in mourning about eighteen months ago, and was then much thinner than I am now."

Lady Hornby, as she spoke, drew out two gowns, and various other articles of dress, which she hung over the fender before the fire, which, in her consideration for Emily's health, was then burning. Feeling that such kindness called for exertion, she arose, and speedily began to arrange her toilet, to the evident delight of her benignant hostess, who, she observed, with great care and facility removed every article of her late dress. It was evident that she did not choose her servants or children should consider *her* friend as an object of *their* pity.

From this hour it might be said that Emily breathed a new atmosphere, and lived in a new world. The house was delightfully situated, and from the garden were enjoyed those features of the surrounding landscape which are peculiar in the perfection of the objects they embrace, not less than the extent they offer—where Nature herself assumes a courtly form, and suffers not one feature to intrude that diminishes the stately softness of the smiling scene. To Emily, every breeze "bore health and healing on its wings," and every object had charms beyond their inherent excellence, for they drew out the long-depressed powers of her own mind, the sense of beauty, and the feeling of admiration, which constitute the peculiar zest of early existence and unsated curiosity.

These sensations were greatly aided by the natural affection she had for children. As the sweet boy and girl, which constituted Lady Hornby's present nursery, were in themselves delightful children, and at the age when opening intellect and more matured affection (for the heart is ever the most forward in early life) render children interesting—when the worthy parents were engaged, a ramble with them was ever agreeable. In the library was an inexhaustible store; and Emily was so behind the rest of the world in modern reading, that she frequently declined all other company to associate with *Ivanhoe* and *Waverley*, weep over *Effie Deans*, or soar with *Childe Harold*, and tremble at *Lara*. Her natural quickness and vivacity returned with the strength of her constitution and the composure of her spirits; and although she by no means forgot, even for a single day, that "some things were, that were most dear" to her, yet "were hers no longer," she yet experienced a species of resurrection from poverty and misery, which placed her comparatively in paradise.

Lady Hornby witnessed, with all the joy of a benevolent and gay heart, this return to the blessings of existence and the powers of usefulness, in a young creature whose outset in life had been so singularly unfortunate; and she frequently insisted to her husband, "that there had never been a girl more lovely in the softness and pensive character of her person and manners, or more fascinating in the sprightly sallies which at intervals shed a brilliant and unexpected beam upon the good sense of her general conversation." Her complexion,

always delicate, had been rendered by circumstances perfectly transparent, and now received the purest tints of the rose to aid its pearly whiteness; her deep blue eyes were almost indefinite in their colour, from their radiance; and the fine contour of her face and form resumed the proportions which penury had reduced and sickness sharpened; and her graceful person received those aids from simple but becoming dress, which evinced a good taste, and proper appreciation of the society in which she now moved.

Yet, happy as Emily now felt herself, it cannot be supposed that a mind so early imbued with the love of independence and justice as hers had been, could rest without making some inquiries as to her present right of enjoyment, or suggesting her intention, when her health became thoroughly established, of entering on some plan for future subsistence. Lady Hornby had known her mother well, and revered her highly; she was a woman full of vivacity, and inclined to enjoy the good things of life; but she was never averse to serious conversation, and was ever strict in the fulfilment of all to which she attached the name of duty. She read the character and wishes of Emily, and sought to render her easy on this and every other subject.

"Mr. Shelburne, my dear, has no other relation but you. He has been a careful man, and is in very good, though not great circumstances. I cannot see how the most fastidious delicacy can object to receiving obligations from a man so situated, especially when you know that in him it is only the returning obligation."

"If I could any way add to his happiness, I should certainly be thankful for his kindness, and feel myself justified in accepting it."

"Well, child, the time may come, and that quite soon enough, when you are called upon to aid the cares of his nurse and housekeeper. In the meantime, I really think you may satisfy your conscience, and yet accept the conveniences and comforts of life, especially when you are aware that you add to my happiness, relieve the self-reproach of your worthy uncle, who, though an old bachelor of the stingy order, is a very good man in the main, and are, moreover, head gover-nante of my hopeful progeny."

"You are very kind; but"—

"Does *but* carry any meaning besides 'I am too proud to be obliged,' or, 'I am too suspicious to trust you?' Does it mean to say, 'A time may come when my uncle may interfere in some tender concern, and that is the point I cannot submit to?'"

"Oh, no," said Emily, with a forced smile; "I have nothing to do with *tender* concerns, I assure you."

"Yet, surely, I remember hearing something about you and—and a pale-faced West India boy, whom poor Mrs. Shelburne was very fond of?—I beg your pardon, Emily, I see I pain you; I perceive he is dead."

"I do not *know* that he is, but I firmly believe it. I will, however, tell you all that I know. Though the unexpected mention of the affair has indeed a little affected me, yet I can speak *now* without pain, for with me affliction has subdued affliction."

Emily then gave a *detailed* account of the very few circumstances which comprised the "short eventful history" of her early love, for it contained also that of her long-concealed sufferings, her many fears, and, finally, the settled opinion she had entertained for the last two years, that Frederick Tracy was indeed dead.

"Dead to you, undoubtedly, my dear, for *ever*, and I would have you believe so; but yet hold your faith in such a manner, as that if he were suddenly to rise again, his ghost should not startle you, but you would treat it with the quiet contempt such a spirit deserves."

"Dead or alive," replied Emily warmly, "Frederick Tracy never will merit contempt. His situation was very singular, and probably proved very unfortunate. Sickness and misfortunes, similar to my own, might prevent his writing in the first instance; and since then, I have been a wanderer in places where it was difficult to trace me; but I am certain, quite certain, of his steady attachment. My mother guarded me, as well as she could, against the events she foresaw as likely to prove eventual barriers; but she said the heart of Frederick might be relied on; and pressed upon me as a duty, that if I married another man, I would closely compare his character with that of Tracy, as the only one on which I could rely for happiness."

"Well, my dear, *I* would have you do so too, since you deem him so unimpeachable. Country ladies and boarding-school misses have a right to indulge in reliance on the fidelity of nineteen and the virtue of

West India planters ; but such faith is not expected in town-fashioned observers of mutable humanity : so, my love, we will say no more about it."

Lady Hornby was as good as her word ; she not only said no more, but she endeavoured, by employing the mind of Emily and engaging her more in company, to lose the remembrance of what she deemed a childish affair on her part ; and so sincerely was she attached to her young charge, that she was anxious to obliterate from her mind every circumstance that had shrouded her opening life with sorrow.





X.

In Accomplished Villain.

RICHMOND was now filling with company, and many friends of Sir Joshua's were among the number. The weather was fine, and parties were frequently formed upon the water, an amusement to which our present family was extremely partial. Emily delighted in the soothing breeze, the gently undulating motion, the musical ripple of the waves as parted by the oars, and the green landscape crowned by majestic trees and stately buildings, which met her view on either hand as they passed unconsciously along. Nor did she now shrink from the salutation of gay friends as one infected by poverty, but readily entered into conversation with the lively and the well-informed, whenever opportunity invited. When not upon the water, their evening promenade on the hill was frequently productive of this, as it was the place for reconnoitring friends; and one evening they met a young gentleman, whom Sir Joshua accosted as his cousin, and hailed with uncommon demonstrations of joy, in which his lady united.

Emily could not feel surprise at the regard they expressed, for she thought at the first view she had never seen a more graceful and elegant person; and his manners were calculated to aid the impression of his form, and struck her the more on account of the marked attention he paid to her, which almost resembled that of an old acquaintance, and she tried in vain to recollect the name of Edgemount. The gentleman protested that he had come down on purpose to find them out, as he had not heard of their movements since they went to Nice, till the preceding day, and then only in general terms.

Mr. Edgemount from this time became the *arbiter elegantiarum* of all their amusements, and soon added many to the circle of the young and the gay, which the hospitable and elegant Lady Hornby had already attracted. Among these were many of the daughters of fashion and fortune, who cast a questioning eye upon the right of our heroine to mingle in the gay assemblage, and by her beauty alone eclipse their united claims. Her natural modesty deserved not this, and her sensibility felt it but too acutely, and would have done so much more, but for the protecting politeness of Mr. Edgemount, who was ever near toward off the wound or soothe her under it; and neither the attractions of wealth or rank ever induced him to waive those assiduities which rendered her the object of envy, and awoke in her the most lively gratitude, and an occasional sense of exultation new to her feelings.

Yet Emily was at this time far from being at ease,

for she was called upon to dress much. The mourning of Lady Hornby was completely worn out, and the contents of her purse were already expended in mere trifles; for Mrs. Hastings had not accorded her the little loan she had entreated, pleading in excuse the sickness of her children. With the utmost management it was therefore impossible for Emily to spin out her share of the money further, and she felt much mortification, from the sneers which were in one respect merited from the figure she cut. She could not bring herself to run in debt, and an application to poor Tom produced only a promise to assist her when he should procure his legacy, which he expected soon. It appeared evident that Lady Hornby either could not, or would not assist her, for her situation was known to her in every particular. With her far distant relation she had as yet held no personal correspondence, and she apprehended that he was the kind of person who would suppose his present sufficient for her relief and her expenses for a year to come.

As Emily thus reasoned she felt the shackles of her dependent state, and sincerely wished that Lady Hornby would allow her to prosecute her desire of entering some family as a governess, where she would be less exposed to "the proud ones' contumely," and her situation assume its true character as a portionless female yet hold its due though humble rank as a gentlewoman. But as Emily thus reasoned, she felt that there was not only in the warm affection she naturally entertained for Lady Hornby, but in the society of her

house, an attraction from which it was impossible to tear herself. Her colour rose to her cheek, and as quickly receded when she thought on Mr. Edgemount; she felt as if she could suffer anything rather than degrade herself in his eyes; and though she said to herself, "yet, surely, I would not deceive him," it was only answered with a sense of solicitude to secure him, a remembrance of his attentions, the envy they had excited, the fears of rivalry, the indefinite nature of his words but the pointed expression of his looks, and the fascination, the generosity, of his distinguishing regard.

Such were the hurried thoughts rushing through her bosom when Lady Hornby herself presented her with a letter, which she observed from the post mark must be from Mr. Stanton, and "she hoped contained money," adding, "which you want terribly, Emily, but not worse than myself; however, we have both credit, and must use it, for I have fixed on Tuesday month for my breakfast, and as I must be the Calypso of the day, so must you be my first attendant nymph:"—"but read, child, read."

"The letter is from Mr. Stanton, who is coming to London to receive money, and is desirous of paying in that which he considers himself owing to me; and knowing that I am actually of age now, wishes me to meet him, and offers to transact the business of placing it in the funds for me. It is a very friendly letter, but to me a puzzling, and in fact distressing one."

"Distressing! I wish the post had brought me a trouble of the same nature, instead of the everlasting

address of 'Madam, having a large account to make up on the 21st, am under the necessity of desiring a remittance from your ladyship *ad interim*, &c.,' which alone constitutes the elegant correspondence of the day, to which my pen must reply by fair promises; my conscience by an assurance that, though a little behind hand just now, I am yet the most regular woman in my own circle; and my situation by saying that the *déjeûné* of Lady Hornby is indispensable, and of course old debts must wait whilst new ones are contracting."

"If I were going to receive my own money, then"—

"You are, Emily, going to receive your *own* to all intents and purposes. When you told me the history of that money, and the fine scene played off by old Hastings for the aid of his own brother's brats at the very time he was quietly robbing the child of his sister-in-law, I made no comment, because I found that the money was actually gone, and I hate talking about irreparable evils—'tis playing the after-game when one has lost the odd trick; but I determined, whenever this interest made its appearance, to look sharp after it, but from what you had said of the time, had no hopes of seeing it so soon, still less that the principal was so near its proper destination. Never could an arrival be more *apropos*, as I take it for granted you will lend me a couple of hundreds, which I really want."

"I would lend you—ah! what would I not lend you? or rather, what do I not *owe* you? But I can never consider the money mine; and though my uncle had indeed done a most unwise and blameable thing in

trusting James with my property, I am fully convinced it was with no nefarious intention. The law, and the world, and my own wants, may justify me, but I cannot justify myself in taking it. I have talked over the matter many times with that angel whom I have lost, and for whose sake alone I could have been tempted to infringe upon it, and we both came to the same conclusion, namely, 'that in my *promise* I had given away my right to retain it;' in fact, I received, and therefore can only hold it for the orphans in question, and they have no other aid, this I know if no other person does; and it is by my *own* conscience I must be guided, not that of another."

"Dear Emily, do listen to common sense, which certainly says, 'that where a female orphan, at the most critical period of her life, is stripped of more than eight thousand pounds, and thrown into want and temptation, but has yet the means of preserving a small portion, she should hold it fast as a duty to herself, and use it as the means of preserving existence, otherwise she is guilty of the crime of suicide.' Your aunt was, I grant, a kind of angel on earth, but really I think a good *woman* is quite a sufficiently good thing for this wicked world, and therefore, in all matters of business, take the advice of one in preference."

"My mother was a good *woman* in your own sense, my lady, and so strict were her ideas on such subjects, that I am certain, so long as I have the power of maintaining myself, she would hold me bound to fulfil the duty I, perhaps foolishly, took upon myself, but which

I yet ought to rejoice in, because I am certain the poor children would never have got the property if I had not done it."

"Umph! then what will you do in your zeal for helping a woman you never saw, and who refused you five pounds when you were dying?"

"*Her* children are as innocent as your own, Lady Hornby—almost as young—they have no father to protect them, and I have reason to fear no uncle either. If we differ in our ideas of the *justice* of this case, we cannot in the compassion it calls for. Think only of your *own*, and then—"

"Ah, well! children are sacred creatures, I own, but yet you are not bound to feed them with the bread you need yourself. Perhaps the little difficulties which press upon me at this moment made me too eager to pounce upon your property: it is the way of the world, but I trust not often my way—forgive me. I must now talk to you about your own dress,—for dressed you shall be, sweetly, elegantly, on this our morning, to the confusion of Lady Caroline and her three honourable daughters. Harry Edgemount has been helping me how to contrive it all; depend upon it we have felt all your slights in that quarter with sufficient acuteness."

"Mr. Edgemount is very good."

"Why; yes, for a man of fashion I take it he is; at all events he is very handsome, and you, Emily, think so—nay, never blush, child, I am not going to arraign your constancy, and I certainly give credit to your taste, but I have had some uneasy hours for you lately.

You cannot but see that Edgemount is beset on all sides, and it is so seldom that simple beauty can carry the day when rank, connection, and all-powerful wealth are opposed to it, that really it makes one tremble ; but do justice to yourself, and we will triumph yet."

"I really do not understand you, my lady."

"That is a *little* bit of a fib, Emily ; but never mind, it is on the point where every woman deceives even her own self ; and it is certain also that a married woman can see further into the crannies and windings of a man's heart than any single woman can, therefore I may be much deeper read in that of Edgemount than you are. I am, however, authorized in saying, he is in love with you ; and between our own selves, (I will not whisper it, no, not even to Sir Joe,) you are in love with him."

"Indeed, Lady Hornby, you are mistaken."

"Indeed, Miss Shelburne, I am not. Depend upon my discretion, Emily, my pride ; I am too true a woman, too faithful to the delicacy of my sex to betray you, but between ourselves, round-about sentimentality would be nonsense. My heart is set upon seeing you well married, and I confess there is also to my taste something very piquant and inviting in the circumstance of thereby circumventing the knowing, and mortifying the supercilious, so that, altogether, the most manœuvring French woman never was more busy than I am at this moment with this affair."

"Pray don't harass yourself on such an account.

Marriage is a very serious affair. A man must be much more than handsome to justify—”

“Very true; and if he takes a woman without fortune or connection, give me leave to say he proves himself *more* than handsome, for he is *disinterested* and *generous*; and when all is said, a good person is no despicable quality—the lamp of love is very apt to burn dim, and if beauty finds oil, depend upon it both parties ought to value the present.”

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of company, and Emily hastily retired. There was a flutter on her spirits both pleasurable and painful, which called for, yet shrunk from, self-examination—something like a sense of approaching triumph, of tender exultation in the preference of a man she certainly admired swelled in her bosom, but yet there was also the first fear of a delicate woman, the “surely he does not know,” which wounded her self-love; then there was the confusion of Lady Hornby’s many reasons against her own established opinions on these perplexing money matters—the full conviction that her patroness needed assistance, which gratitude compelled her to accord, and her hitherto superior integrity induced her to withhold. “What could she do?” continually trembled on her lip, which was as frequently answered by “*some* money I must have both for Lady Hornby and myself.”

Both these thoughts were put to flight when she was called to the breakfast-room to help to write cards of invitation, and saw on the way Mr. Edgemount alight

from his curricule and hasten forward to assist them. Lady Hornby, in her element when elegant bustle was the order of the day, assigned to each their portion, desiring both her husband and visitor to give them into the hands of Emily for approbation.

"Sir Joshua's are very neat," said the monitor, "but, really yours, Mr. Edgemount, are—"

"Abominable," cried the baronet. "Why, Edmund, you write worse than ever, since you were at college. They told me you cut a figure there ;—with these pot-hooks, it must have been a figure of fun, ha ?"

"Surely you would not have me legible, Sir Joshua ? that is what no gentleman pretends to now-a-days ; 'tis the most inconvenient thing in the world ;—but for the error, the vile rustic error, of writing a fine hand, I should never have cut the figure you allude to ; so there is a case in point against your own horrid legibleness."

"Indeed ! pray let us hear it."

"During our examination, I sat by accident near a country youth, who wrote not only with the rapidity required by the case, but with a neatness and beauty that proved him a descendant of old Tomkins ; every word was legible enough to give you at a glance the meaning of a sentence, and most opportunely came to my aid, just as I had reached the length of my own memory. I copied every thought—gave 'em in my own words, and, when added to the rest, they made such a weight of evidence, as to give me the day, and distance the penman, who become the cypher which made me a figure."

"I hope," said Emily, "I hope—" But the object of her hope was not explained, and she blushed excessively.

"When such a bloom is awakened by your hope, you can never be disappointed in it," said Mr. Edgemount, with an inquiring eye ; but Emily was silent.

"I know, Emily, what you were about to say, for your eyes were fixed on my boy at the moment ;—you hoped the child did not understand this story ;—as his father, I thank you, my dear ; I hope so too."

This was not all that Emily had hoped ; for she meant to inquire "how Mr. Edgemount had afterwards explained the matter ;" and she was glad when the baronet made the same inquiry. On learning no such circumstance had taken place, and that Mr. Edgemount regarded it as a "mere college trick," a capital joke, that quizzed the young one, who was, in fact, "merely a shopkeeper's son, sent up by granddada to cut a figure in future times as a village curate, for the edification of brown-coated farmers and their white-aproned dames ;" the roses fled, and sickness even of the heart succeeded.

"Could Frederick Tracy have done this?" said Emily's memory to her conscience ; and the answer was certainly very positively a negative ; therefore Emily ceased to pursue the inquiry, but she did the next wise thing to it ; she determined that on going to London to meet Mr. Stanton, she would consider the matter over there. It struck her, that in Richmond there was a confusion, a business, an interruption to recollection, which in London she had never experienced. She was right:

ease and indulgence, the fulness of content, the enervation of pleasure, the seducing influence of passion, were all around her, and within her ; she had ceased to *consider* ; and the blandishment was so gentle, the influence apparently so little tainted by aught that virtue could condemn, or religion exclude, who could be surprised ?

A train of thought was, however, now awakened, which, by recalling the memory of past days, marked her ingenuous countenance with a pensive character, which Lady Hornby wished to dissipate, and in the evening they walked down to the water side, where the band were then playing. The scene was singularly gay and beautiful, as the sun was declining, and threw his broad rays over the silver bosom of the river ; and Emily, who had kept very close all the evening to Sir Joshua, from a sense of reliance, and similarity of thinking to him, was descanting on its beauties, when she was suddenly interrupted by the jump of a fine greyhound from a boat, who fawned upon her with such violence as nearly to throw her down.

Mr. Edgemount struck the animal angrily.

“ Oh, don’t strike him,” cried Emily, “ pray don’t strike him ;—it is Sancho. Poor Sancho ! poor fellow ! pretty fellow ! So, so, Sancho !—Ah ! I know you, I do, indeed.”

The owner whistled, but in vain ; Sancho would not leave his old friend, and even the owner seemed, on his being obliged to come on shore, loath to part them.

“ Is the dog yours, Miss Shelburne ?” said Mr. Edgemount.

"No, sir,—it is my cousin Tom's ; but we lived together, and, of course, he became very fond of me."

"Of *course*, *ma'am*," said Mr. Edgemount, with an angry sneer, suddenly placing the arm of Lady Hornby within his own, leaving Sir Joshua to adjust the matter. This was not difficult ; for the gentleman who owned the dog seemed perfectly willing to render Emily happy in any way ; and as she assured him she wished the dog to be taken home at present, poor Sancho was carried back ; but it was understood that whenever she claimed him, the owner was willing to relinquish him, and cards were exchanged for the furtherance of that object betwixt Sir Joshua and the gentleman, who, it appeared, was a Colonel Mortimer.

Mr. Edgemount's temper was evidently much ruffled by this incident, which also served greatly to depress the already dejected Emily, to whom Sancho had appeared as the representative of her whole family ; and although, with one exception, there was perhaps little to regret in them, yet from early association all were important in her sight ; and towards Tom, in particular, she had ever felt the affection of a sister ; and from his extraordinary sufferings in consequence of his mother's death, and the happy effect it appeared to have upon him, so far as she could judge, he was become yet more interesting to her than he had been in happier times ; and the remembrance of their mutual sorrows, thus recalled, was exceedingly affecting to her.

Sir Joshua seemed to enter into her feelings ; for he neither noticed her silence, nor appeared to see the

tears which, from time to time, swam in her eyes ; and therefore, as Mr. Edgemount declined entering the house, though he indicated an intention of doing so by-and-by, and there were no other company, she did not absent herself from the usual sitting-room, as it was probable she might be desired to play during the evening.

"What a miserable walk has that unlucky animal caused to me," said Lady Hornby, pettishly.

"I think you were to be pitied, indeed, my dear," said Sir Joshua ; "for Edmund certainly appeared in high dudgeon. I conclude he was struck with sudden jealousy ; and certainly this Colonel Mortimer did eye Emily with no common interest, and is rather an alarming-looking rival ; from his mourning, and even his manners, I take him to be a widower, and by no means unlikely to make a fair lady love him 'for the sorrow he has passed.'"

"In the hasty glance I took of him, he struck me as a fashionable looking man, who had a veteran air. But Edgemount's jealousy is directed to a much younger and handsomer, but certainly less attractive man,—being no other than young Hastings."

"Then I suppose he considered Sancho as his master's representative, and envied even the glove upon her hand which patted his sleek sides ?"

"Even so ; and though I told him that the poor young fellow was in positive poverty—that Emily had not heard from him for some weeks—and that during almost three months he had not once called upon her,

notwithstanding you had cordially invited him, I could make no impression. He spoke much of people living together, and opportunities, and early affections, and being designed for one another by parents, and all that; said, 'that when a man sought only for a woman, not a fortune, he required a *whole heart*, and strict propriety of conduct;' muttered about low connections, and the wisdom of not committing a man's self; and, in short, was mighty disagreeable, as all men are when in such vagaries."

"And did you not take fire? and—"

"Oh, no; I bore it with the spirit of a martyr;—answered not only for Emily's pure thoughts, but her first virgin affections; her—"

"Oh, dear Lady Hornby, why—why did you condescend?"

"Hush, my dear Emily, and hear me out; I said, 'That although as a mere child, her mother engaged her, yet her own heart had no concern in it, and had long ceased to remember even the person of the ordinary boy in question; that the sons of her uncle, who had robbed her of fortune, would never presume to enter the house of any gentleman who might raise her merit to the rank she had (in spite of her misfortunes) a right to hold; and that I hoped—"

"You said too much, by half, Lady Hornby."

"Oh, sadly, sadly!" cried Emily, bursting into tears.

"Well!" exclaimed Lady Hornby, "this is very fine truly! Pray, what have I said as a negotiant, which every mother, aunt, guardian, or chaperon, is not saying

on all sides of me, when they wish to help those who can't help themselves? Are these times to throw away the chance of such a settlement as Edgemount gives a woman, at the very time when so many are trying to catch him?"

"Ah, there's the rub, Lady Hornby; you have set your heart on carrying your point, and in your zeal, forget, in my opinion, what is due to Emily's feelings."

"Perhaps you are right; perhaps, too, *he* is right in the assertion, that she is attached to Tom beyond the ties of consanguinity; he says, 'That this very morning he saw him in handsome new mourning, seated on a coach in Bond Street, which he thought was a Richmond one, and it then struck him he was coming here.'"

"Does he then know my cousin?" said Emily, with an air of great surprise.

"He appears to know him very well; and it seems has been long acquainted with your person, and even your voice; and certainly knows your past situation exactly; for, in speaking of Tom, he observed, 'After the mother's death, though he certainly left the house, he used to prowl about it like a wolf about his prey.'"

"Rather like a shepherd about his flock," said Emily, rising with a dignified air, as she added, "you have entered into most humiliating explanations on *my* part, madam, and I must beg of you now to inquire how a man in Mr. Edgemount's situation, became acquainted with one so low in the world as my poor cousin? If my suspicions are just—if this gentleman is the unnamed person, whom Tom was continually guarding

me against, as one who wished to take advantage of my unprotected situation and great distress, in consequence of having seen me in the shop where I sold my drawings, but whom my confusion in so new and trying a situation prevented me from noticing,—if *he* be the man who condescended to mislead an ignorant youth, and tamper with that unformed principle, he could at once use and despise,—I beseech you to tell him, that, although as a husband I never even thought of my cousin but with *fear* and *disgust*, yet I consider him infinitely *his* superior ; and that I would rather lie down and die in the garret from which you drew me, than condescend to become his wife.”

As Emily ceased to speak, she sunk down on the nearest seat for a moment, but suddenly recollecting Mr. Edgemount might call, she rose, and Sir Joshua, leading her kindly to the door, entreated her to be assured “he would make every proper inquiry ;” but Lady Hornby did not speak, and the cruelty of her silence fell hardly on the heart of poor Emily, who, although goaded to anger, and sensible that she was right in the expression of her just indignation, yet felt her heart shaken to its inmost core, in her dread of all that would follow. She could not, in the present ebullition of feeling, regret Mr. Edgemount, but Lady Hornby was *dear* to her heart as a friend, and held by her in the light of a beloved benefactress ; and in any way to offend *her*, appeared the height of ingratitude in her ; but what rendered the crime far worse, was the probability there appeared of dividing in their opinions, and therefore

injuring deeply the connubial agreement of a couple who, till now, had been singularly happy. This evil was the greater, because it was evident that a single reflection from Lady Hornby must for ever close every door upon her, by which the future means of support to which she now determinately looked could be obtained; and she knew that though of an excellent disposition, and general good temper, her ladyship often spoke unadvisedly, as the spoiled children of love and fortune are too apt to do.

Harassed by fearful expectations, contradictory wishes, and sorrowful remembrances, Emily this night found her bed of down the most uneasy she had ever pressed; she felt herself again alone on a wide and stormy ocean, where the waves of the frightful past were scarcely less dreadful than the threatening future, and with a more acute sense than she had ever felt before. She now lamented the destruction of that plan of happiness her mother's wishes and her own early love had ventured to build; and her busy thoughts now made those comparisons between Tracy and Edgemount, from which she had lately fled. "The one," said she, "is indeed gone for ever, and I may never find his equal; but ought I to have formed a single wish for so sacred a connection without seeking for some traits beyond the insinuating and the elegant? But, alas! my religion, my integrity, even my affections—those affections whose objects the grave ought rather to hallow than extinguish—all, *all* were melting away in the sunshine of prosperity; perhaps 'it is good for me, that I am afflicted.'"

It was now bright morning, and Emily arose, and

throwing on a night-gown looked out upon the fair face of nature, as if to seek in the calm stillness of all around somewhat to tranquillize her fevered mind ; nor did she look in vain, for she was led by degrees to pour out her sorrows in prayer, and to exercise her faith of guardianship for the future, on that sure helper who had led her through the past.

When Emily rose from her knees, being sensible that though more tranquil she yet was incapable of sleeping, she partly dressed herself, and then once more took from her little drawing box the first, last letter of Frederick Tracy. She read and re-read his fervid assurance of unchanging affection, and his entreaty that she would consider him as a friend devoted to her welfare, even if she were tempted to renounce him as a lover ; and in retracing all the proofs of his delicate attention to her welfare and her wishes, that ardent love which beamed in his eyes and influenced his every word and action, yet was controlled by that undeviating love of justice which forbade him to obey even the virtuous passion which he was proud to profess ; when she recollected the proofs of his humanity, his intrepidity in early life, and how he advanced not only in the love but the esteem of all who knew him best, with advancing time, she felt as if she could "live a vestal for her dead love's sake," for of his death she would not even allow herself to doubt, since, if not dead, his silence was base and cruel.

The tears of Emily fell freely from her eyes, as she thus renewed her first sorrows as a lover but yet they

relieved not her heart, and her dread of descending to the breakfast table was so great that, though sensible it grew late, she would still have delayed if she had not been summoned by Lady Hornby's maid, when she suddenly put the torn relic into her bosom and hastened down stairs.

Lady Hornby was not in the breakfast parlour, and as Emily entered Sir Joshua vanished by an opposite door, without even offering her the usual salutation ; her heart sunk still lower, but it throbbed violently when the servant said, "that Mr. Edgemount was at that time above, in conversation with his lady."

A thousand times Emily endeavoured to command the universal trepidation which seized her, but could not be obeyed, yet she was sensible that now she had for ever closed all intercourse with Mr. Edgemount ; the night before she had wished for her *own* sake that she might prove mistaken in her surmises, she now only desired it for *his*, and that on the common principles of charity, for as severe sorrow had driven out the tender remembrances of her early regret, when it could no longer feed on hope, so had the late storm apparently blown down the airy fabric of a more ardent, perhaps, but far less enduring passion ; and all of hope or fear which now agitated her spirits was that which belonged to her friendship and her dependence.

"Good morning, Miss Shelburne," said Lady Hornby, as she entered, in a kind of awkward half-graciousness ; "pray what have you done with Joshua?"

"Sir Joshua left the room as I entered it, ma'am."

"Um—m—m—without speaking?"

"Without speaking."

"Um—m! I did not think he would have done that, that is keeping a threat too closely. I must bring him about. I must coax a little, that's certain."

As Lady Hornby spoke she passed through the door into the garden, to seek her husband, and was soon seen returning with him, passing her arm through his, and looking in his face with those "wreathed smiles," which gave to her animated features the very character of the Euphrosyne, but their general influence was not perceptible. The husband was very grave.

It was plain they had been quarrelling, and that Emily had been the subject of dispute. If the silence of the preceding evening inflicted a pang upon the lady, that of the gentleman was now scarcely less afflictive; but it was evident that her ladyship had recovered her good humour, and it was well known that all would shortly yield to the influence of it, even before she began to open her mission.

"Well, good people, I have had an interview with the delinquent, and am prepared to open the pleadings of the court."

"Pray proceed, the sooner the business is despatched the better," said Sir Joshua, "for I have an engagement at a distance."

Lady Hornby was suddenly silent, she coloured, set down her tea-cup, and it was evident the tears were in her eyes, but she rallied, and continued to say, with great volubility,--

"Well, I must come to the point, for it is of great importance as you say, and will wind up in the novel kind of way; certes it is that our good cousin did see a distressed damsel on whom he cast an eye of love—yes, *love*, and who was a temptation to him by reason—"

"A temptation to *him*?"

"Certainly, by being herself an object on which temptation might be supposed to work; moreover, she was one from her retiredness, her devotedness to an old aunt, and numberless other peculiarities, which bespoke her innocence, her humility, her tenderness; and, in fact (nonsense apart), are not all these things actual temptations to a man, especially when combined with superior education? Do not they all promise him precisely the companion he wishes for his hours of leisure? Nay, Sir Joshua, don't purse up your lip in that way; we ought to look at both sides of the question. Was it likely that Edgemount, with his person, fortune, expectations, and prospects, should have run after a young woman, situated as poor Emily was, with any matrimonial view?"

"I don't say he should; but I assert—"

"Well, well, now hear me out. From the hour she came under your protection his views were honourable, but his mind was not, could not, be easily made up, and he therefore sought to gain a decided interest in her heart before he ventured to disclose himself, and likewise to wean her more decidedly from what he terms her *low* connections, though I told him 'twas an unfair

term, for the Hastings were a good family ; but to come to the close of my speech, I am free to declare, as you members say, that without let, hindrance, or molestation, Edmund Edgemount, Esq., of Edgemount Manor, Salop, doth hereby now fully offer his hand and fortune to Emily Shelburne.

* * * * *

“Silence on the lady’s part, so I concluded, for silence is the maiden’s consent.”

“Then she must be silent no longer,” said Emily trembling, yet with an air of resolution. “I am so positively certain that Mr. Edgemount is a man whom I could not *honour* that no consideration on earth should induce me to promise him obedience.”

“Hear him, Emily, hear him, no lips can plead for a lover like his own ; had you seen the air of penitence he wore, the expression of sorrow on his fine countenance, I am sure you would have felt it ; you have not said you could *not love* him, and depend upon it, in a woman’s *love* lie all the honour and obedience which influence her as a wife ; in her case the words of Scripture apply closely, that ‘love is the fulfilling of the law.’”

“Then let me add, and I add it firmly, unhesitatingly, I could not *love* him, for every species of fraud, subterfuge, and injustice is abhorrent to my nature, to say nothing of cruelty and vice. No, no, I have my eyes open, and know what I can endure and what I cannot. With a good man I could eat the bread of labour, and creep into the roofless shed of poverty without a murmur, for I should trust to sharing his society in another and a

better world; but with a bad man the very blessings I partook with him would be turned to gall."

"Ah, 'tis fine talking, child, but hear him at all events, you can hear him speak, you know."

"Pardon me, Lady Hornby, if I say I will not hear him. I will not wound my own feelings by submitting to hear allusions made to intentions which ought not to sully the mind of a young woman; on this point I have suffered enough, and as, like Jeanie Deans, I would not marry him 'for a' the land within the grip o' the rainbow,' so it is my most earnest desire that the whole affair may vanish from my mind like the rainbow, and leave me to the quiet darkness of that path in which God hath placed me."

"Well, if you continue in these heroics, I grant that is the best way, for, certainly, Mr. Edgemount is our relative, distant 'tis true, but then he is our friend, and really, to say the truth, though it is a wrong thing, a *very* wrong thing, for men to be guilty in the way they are, yet what can be done? We cannot shut our door on such people without absolutely excluding all society. A man in such a case would never have a pistol out of his hand, and a woman, what can a woman do?"

"Julia! Julia!" cried Sir Joshua in great emotion, "do not allow these shallow no reasons so to impose upon your understanding. You know perfectly well, that in the present situation of society women can do everything. The selfish libertine, who bends to no principle, listens to no sermon, obeys 'no compunctious visiting of conscience,' would yet shrink from the frown

of a woman of fashion, nor dare to intrude in the pure circle with which she may always surround herself. Much has been done of late years by which, as a people, our vices are rendered less obtrusive; but much remains to do; and in my opinion women, who, from their personal attractions, rank, and fortune, become leaders in society, have an awful duty to perform—a responsibility to which their children and their country have a right to call their daily attention. It is theirs to weed the garden of polished society, and keep its flowers uncontaminated by noxious associations—to distinguish between him who honours their sex, and the laws which protect its weakness, and him who, in injuring one, degrades you all. Emily, as a girl, is justifiable, amiable, in shrinking from those observations which readily offer themselves to every person of honour and feeling; but the married woman, without courting publicity by a parade of virtue, should yet never allow its infringement, even in thought, without decidedly pointing her anathema against the offence; and in such a duty how great is the reward! The indignant frown not only punishes sin, but prevents crime; not only guards the victim, but the seducer, by arming him against himself, and compelling him to consider.”

Lady Hornby listened as one “not unwrung,” but in a low voice said something about “men being only men.”

“True, Lady Hornby, only men we all are and must be. In this world we shall never be angels; and all I

contend for is, that your sex should prevent us from being devils; and when we are so, not to caress us as superior beings, which is perpetually the case. It has been my pride, the honest joy of my heart, to believe, and in some instances to witness, the noble scorn of generous indignation illumine your countenance on those occasions. Don't you remember my saying to you at Lady Austin's rout, 'Twenty such women as you, Julia, would restore us the purity of Elizabeth's court?' When I compare the exultation with which my heart honoured you at that moment with the sensation which oppressed my mind whilst you addressed Emily about Edgemount, I cannot wonder that I speak warmly. I have been, Julia, too happy to be calm, too fond to be indifferent, about one thought of yours."

Lady Hornby threw her arms about her husband's neck, and wept. Emily sought her own apartment, and wept also. She was thankful that the late scene was over, and especially that the wife she tenderly loved, and the husband she truly honoured, were in the way for reconciliation; but she saw clearly that her "pleasant home" would be so no longer—that Sir Joshua was either estranged from her, or, what seemed more probable, afraid of giving her the support his principles and his good-will sincerely accorded her. In her perplexity she referred to Mr. Stanton's letter, determining to get aid from him in seeking a future home; at the same time she considered it an act of justice to herself to write to her relation, Mr. Shelburne, being not without hopes that he would desire her to join him at Nice;

and in the present solicitude of her mind, she felt that desire to fly from the scene of her troubles which is always the first wish of a perplexed and wounded spirit.

It was one consolation to find that Mrs. Stanton was with her husband, for she was a motherly woman, and dear to her aunt; and as they were in London by that time, she saw no reason why she should not go in the morning, or even then. "I could sleep," said she, "after such a wearisome night, in my own poor bed in Westminster. 'Take physic, pomp,' is perhaps the wisest language I could address to myself, for I cannot help feeling as if another great change were hanging over me. Oh that, like my aunt, I could say with a confiding soul, 'Thy will be done!'"





XI.

The Intercepted Letters.

FMILY found that Lady Hornby was denied to all visitors, and that Sir Joshua's usual ride was postponed a full hour; but when she saw from her window, which looked upon the road, that he had really set out, she determined on seeking his lady, and consulting with her on the propriety of fulfilling her intention; but whilst she sought a few things to put in her reticule, Lady Hornby entered the room.

“Well, my dear, I have dismissed your lover, satisfied my liege lord, and—my own conscience (shall I say?)—yes! my conscience, for I have one, after all. I wrote to the lover, saying, ‘that as a faithful ambassador I had reported his generous offer to Miss Shelburne, represented his sorrow for the past, his hopes for the future; but that my young friend had honoured herself and gratified me by firmly declining a union inconsistent with her ideas, and all the rest of it.—So perish my hopes of cutting a figure in the annals of Richmond, ‘confounding the politics’ of the dowager, and”—

"And, according to your belief and the warm wishes of your kind heart, making me happy, for that was in truth your motive; but I entreat you to be easy, dear Lady Hornby."

"That is impossible. I am *wretched*, and deserve to be so. Sit down; I have used you ill—unkindly I will not say. I will do so no more, for I know myself to be a frail vessel, and very subject to ooze out in wrong places; but I will give you your revenge—less, however, to do justice to you than to solicit compassion for myself."

Emily tried to call up her courage. She felt that a new attack would be made upon her, and in a way she could least withstand; for the countenance of Lady Hornby was really full of sorrow and anxiety, and there was something irresistibly affecting in the grief of one whose general character was so buoyant, and whose gaiety passed with electric influence through every circle animated by her presence.

"You must perceive," said Lady Hornby, "that Sir Joshua is very particular, almost indeed to a fault; but then there are so many excellent qualities about him;—he has so generous a temper, so good a heart. But to the *point*. When we took our late trip to France (in which, 'tis but bare justice to say, he left nothing undone that could add to my pleasure), he yet most pertinaciously insisted on one point, which was, as you may suppose, that no consideration should induce me to bring over anything contraband. He said, 'that'—but why should I trouble you or myself with

his reasons. 'Tis enough that I heard all, agreed with all, and promised implicit obedience—an obedience the more easy, because I was supplied, of course, with abundance during my stay. Well, Emily, after all this, I am a melancholy proof that temptation may be resisted nine times, yet prove fatal the tenth. After traversing half France, it was my lot to meet the first tempter, like Eve, the first time I left my Adam's side, in the form of a lace dress, that could be compressed into a very little compass. At Boulogne did I spend my last louis, and, what was ten times worse, forfeit my promise. The misery the thing gave me, the consciousness that I could not wear it, without as many fibs as there were flowers, rendered my first punishment quite sufficient, and I determined to sell it immediately on our arrival in town, to some of my friends. Previous to landing at Margate, various discoveries were made condemnatory to our fellow-passengers, but in our luggage was no forbidden fruit. At this time the examinations were very strict, and some ladies held their reticules with trembling hands, as they became fearful not only those little repositories, but even their persons, would be searched. Sir Joshua stood guard over me, with an air of defiance as to the latter, and with the proud frankness of perfect ease as to the former. He held out his hand to receive the bag from me. Oh, the horrors of the moment! Never did I wish before for the invention of a stage Abigail; and my own, whom, by the by, I did not trust, was at a distance. Luckily, *most luckily!* a woman near me,

with a child in her arms, became suddenly faint. I withdrew my half-extended arm, hastened to assist the child, and in doing so, managed to throw the reticule into the sea; the silver in my purse carried it down, and my lightened heart sprang up again."

"It was certainly a very happy loss," observed Emily.

"True, my dear, but it carried better than £300 with it, which I could never by any after-management make up; and it is utterly impossible for me to confess my fault to Sir Joshua now, not only on account of my first error, but because I have since then suffered him to praise me for this very merit—an act of disingenuousness his soul would abhor, though my sufferings were quite enough to expiate the sin. Oh, Emily! depend upon it, there is no dread so poignant as the dread of disgrace, no possible misery like that of infamy."

"I believe it, my lady; your concluding words are an excellent comment on the doctrines of Sir Joshua on another case of delinquency."

"Very true; I know it all—I feel it all. Sin and shame are, or ought to be, inseparable companions; but so ought *power* and *mercy*. I have thrown myself, in all the naked misery of my error and my wants, upon you. I know you will not betray my secret, for my confidence equally binds your honour and your humanity; and no woman living can have more of either. But can you, will you help me with money? If you do not, you are cruel, nay, *unjust*; since, but for you, I could have commanded it from Edmund; he is at least"—

"Dear, *dear* Lady Hornby, do not for a moment even think of such a thing. I will do anything—everything in my power ; I will borrow it for you ; but tell me how much, or rather how little will do."

"I can manage with less than two hundred pounds ; but I must have more than one immediately."

"Well—pray be easy ; I will go to London to-night ; to-morrow morning I will see Mr. Stanton, and do all I can. I doubt not he will help me to save you from pain. I may venture on such a debt as this."

"Oh, no ; go to-morrow ; you are ill, you are not able to go, dear Emily ; I shall have your death to answer for. I would much rather you should stay, and in the course of the evening talk freely about your errand (which I have, indeed, already named) ; but mention no money-matters direct,—that is, name no sum. Ah ! how continually do those who merit suspicion suspect it ; you know what I mean, Emily : do not throw your own affairs too open, lest it should do so eventually by mine : in what a state have I placed myself !"

"I had better go," said Emily, shaking her head ; "for I know that I cannot look a lie, much less act one ; there is not a spark of the equivocating, or even the manœuvring, in my composition."

"Very true, child ; I know the sensation exactly ; you shall go. Stokes shall attend you ; or would you rather have the housemaid ?"

"I will have neither. You have already spoiled me, dear Lady Hornby ; I must go and take a new lesson, by returning to old lodgings."

A sandwich was soon taken. Stokes attended Emily to the coach, who chewed the cud of many bitter fancies as it bore her from the scene of past pleasures to the scene of past penury and sorrow. On reaching Bond Street, she alighted, and after making some little purchases at a tea-dealer's, proceeded to Westminster.

As a cry of sorrow had marked her parting, so a joyful scream of exultation from the young ones welcomed her return ; and Mrs. Betty, with her father, seemed to enjoy the honour as well as the pleasure of her visit, saying, " We knew, ma'am, as how you would be coming, *because* of the letter ; and that made us not send it to Mr. Thomas. Sally, fetch the letter down stairs ; it ha' been here these three days."

" Then you see my cousin sometimes ?"

" Oh, yes, ma'am ; he have looked in several times ; but he cannot abide to go up stairs since you be gone ; it makes him fret as bad as ever ; but I can't say but he looks poorly ; don't you think so yourself ?"

" I have never seen him since I left you, and not even heard of him for six weeks."

" Ah ! how odd ! why, he said last Monday, he was going down on purpose to see you, Miss. Then, I suppose, you don't know that his brother died down in the country ; and he has been, poor young man, to bury him :—there is no end of some people's misfortunes."

No end, indeed, thought Emily, of those which have fallen on my family, as she gave a sigh to the memory of him who had brought them all upon his house, in

the ambitious activity and deficient principle he had evinced ; and it was some minutes before she could open the letter, which she perceived to be from Mrs. Hastings, the widow.

In this letter the writer apologized for her last ; she said she was then trembling for the life of her children, and, in her anxiety to procure aid for them, lost every other consideration ;—that the period of her anxiety had been long and severe, as regarded her son, but he was now happily restored, and she felt it her first wish as well as duty, to beg that Miss Shelburne would appropriate the next interest to her own use.

This letter cheered the spirits of Emily, for she had no objection to accept an accommodation she felt to be her due ; and the idea of assisting Lady Hornby was sweet to her heart, and rendered her humble fare pleasant, and her hard couch the seat of refreshing sleep ; so that she was enabled to see her country friends, the Stantons, with more composure of spirits than she had lately enjoyed, and consult with them as to her future plan of life, and, what was of more immediate consequence, the disposition of the money.

“That is already done. I have bought in stock for you, my dear, and cleared you seventy-eight pounds, nine shillings, which, with the interest up to this day, amounting to forty-five pounds, fourteen shillings, I have sealed in this paper, for I wished to spare all trouble, as we have much to talk about, much to hear, respecting our old friend, Mrs. Hastings.”

Emily's heart beat quick as she received this money,

and she eagerly ejaculated, "Ah! how rich I am!—I only want fifty pounds now to—"

"If I had known you wanted an odd hundred or so, I could easily have managed that for you; but I knew that you had no one to advise you, and having a fine opportunity to purchase stock, I thought it my duty."

"You were kind and right in all you did, and I sincerely thank you, and will hold myself still more your debtor, if you will enable me to place this money, which I hold in trust, out of my own power, so that, if trials like the past should arise, I may not be tempted above what I may at that time be able to bear."

This led to explanations which surprised them, and was followed by details which rent their hearts, but which led to happy results; as Mr. Stanton, in admiration of Emily's principles, and his compassion for her situation, was induced to set out on a journey of inquiry amongst the creditors of her uncle, of whose affairs and existence she was in total ignorance.

When Emily found that she must stay another night in London, she felt even her possessions burdensome, and could not forbear writing a line to Lady Hornby, entreating her to come to town for a single day, adding, that she could not choose a dress without her. This *ruse* was innocent, but it cost her a sigh, for it was connected with sad thoughts, from which she was drawn by Mr. Stanton.

"Dear, dear! what a pity it is that ever you went to Richmond, Miss Shelburne! I have been running from pillar to post the last two hours, but all to no purpose,

to catch your cousin William, who, it seems, made his appearance on 'Change yesterday, and left the house of — just before I entered."

"I know very little of William, but am anxious about his father to the greatest degree ; did you hear of him, sir ?"

"I did, and so would you, if you had not been out of the way. The old man has sent large remittances, and paid his creditors two-thirds of their demand. I understand that each person was specified as to the money, or in some cases property, remitted, but no mention whatever was made of you—a most extraordinary proceeding ; some steps ought to be taken immediately on your behalf."

"Let us see William first, my dear sir ; he may have letters that will explain why I was omitted."

"I believe we shall be obliged to do so, because I have no clue how to claim ; and I fear, indeed, all is gone ; much has been done, as it is, considering the time ; and with care, doubtless, all will prove eventually good for *them*, but *you* have been every way infamously treated : however, your bond is good yet, that is my comfort. I shall take care the money remains in your name, and my advice is, see a little further yet."

"I am willing to do so, for I hope I shall see Mr. Hastings come back, and resume his own guardianship. Poor man ! I feel assured he is doing his best now for me ; I can trust him ; for though he did wrong in relying on James, nothing could be further from his wishes, or more averse to his intentions, than injuring me ; he

will come back fully to redeem his character, and die in honour and peace among his own people and family, I sincerely hope."

The longer Emily thought on these subjects the more anxious she became to see William; but before it was possible for Mr. Stanton to find him, Lady Hornby's footman brought her a note written the night before, and despatched with that rapidity which generally characterized that lady's movements.

"DEAR EMILY,—Come to Dover Street the moment you receive this, for there will I be to meet you. Think nothing of me (*entendezvous*), but come directly; I have something very strange and very sad to tell you about your cousin James. Tom is now with us; I like him much.—Yours, &c.,

"J. H."

Emily could not be sorry for this summons, for her heart ached with impatience to lay her little offering before her friend; she also wished to see poor Tom, who now seemed more than ever her only relation; though she apprehended that the circumstances of James's death, as alluded to by Lady Hornby, being already known to her, were of less moment than the sight of William would be; but having arranged with Mr. Stanton how he might see her, she obeyed the summons, and reached Sir Joshua's house only a few minutes before the arrival of its mistress, who had set down her husband and visitant at the entrance to the Park.

"Here is something," said Emily, laying down her little package, "and I hope to make it more ere long.

Mr. Stanton is very kind, and I have good news from poor uncle Hastings."

Lady Hornby took the money, but she did not smile, as she pressed the hand which presented it; on the contrary, Emily thought her eyes were suffused with tears, and they were not those of pleasure.

"Sit down, my love; have you heard that James is dead?"

"I have, and dread to learn in what manner he left the world; will you tell me?"

"He suffered a great deal from losing his arm, which at length threw him into a decline; but not conceiving himself in danger, did not inform his brother in time for him to see him alive. He had, poor man, laboured indefatigably in his affairs many months, and unquestionably hastened his death by his exertions; he was pitied, and even respected in Liverpool, for his strenuous endeavours to make reparation for the past."

"Poor man!" said Emily, wiping her eyes, "he could do no more; may God forgive him!"

"I hope you will not recall that word, though his cruelty to you went beyond the robbery of fortune."

"What can you mean, dear Lady Hornby? He said so himself, but—"

"In his box were found these five letters to you; every seal is unbroken—there was honour even in his treachery;—doubtless it was done with a view of securing you to himself or his brother."

Emily arose; she gazed upon the letters,—she beheld the hand-writing over which she had so lately wept.

Frederick Tracy, the beloved, the lamented, seemed to rise from the grave, and gaze upon her with looks of love and sorrow unutterable, that said, "Oh, how have I suffered!"

So horror-struck, so bewildered were the eyes of Emily, that Lady Hornby was terrified by their expression; and she sought, by even exciting acute sorrow, to recall the powers of that reason which seemed suspended.

"Let us read these letters, Emily."

"No, no! I cannot read them; they come from the grave to me; they are full of reproaches,—they say I sent him thither,—*I*, who would at this very moment share it with him. Oh, James, James! you have driven me mad! I remember, now,—I well remember my uncle saying that somebody had seen Tracy at Antigua, and he looked very ill,—yes! yes!—well might he look ill, when she who was his whole world had forsaken him,—had left him to struggle with difficulties, to perform the most noble duties (in defiance, perhaps, of other duties), to suffer reproach where he merited praise, to destroy his dearest hopes, yet persist in his integrity.—Was his a heart to be torn and crushed?—to be forsaken and forgotten by the daughter of such a mother as mine? Oh, no, no, no! his heart, that generous, noble heart, has been broken, and apparently by me;—by me, whom he esteemed so much too highly;—*me!* whose very peace he would have died to preserve!"

As poor Emily thus raved in the agony of a sorrow

which bore no control, she hurried up and down the room with frantic steps, which Lady Hornby could not check, till, opening one of the letters, she began to read, and her tears flowed freely ; which, when Emily perceived, she at last stopped, and listened to the anxious inquiries, the tender pleadings of the young lover : and she, too, wept long and bitterly, with a subdued and tranquillized sorrow ; but from time to time, the same terrible ebullitions arose, and the least word of comfort irritated her gentle spirit beyond endurance.

“ You do not know what he was,” she would cry ; “ you know not the firmness and the mildness of his nature, nor the discipline to which he subjected himself, that he might prove his own strength for the trials before him. Oh, how much more do I value his virtues *now*, than I could do *then* ; for I now know that he stood alone,—that his heart was moulded by the best of mothers, for the kindest purpose. What did he think of me ?—what could he think ? ”

“ Yet, there is no reproach in these letters, Emily.”

“ Oh, no ! he pitied me, even while he despised me. He would not reproach the child of her whom he honoured so much ; and, perhaps, he became poor, and therefore thought I shrunk from an early, imprudent choice ; yet he knew that I had told him, if *his* last shilling went to pay his father’s debts, *my* last shilling should be shared with him ;—doubtless he considered me a child, a toy ;—perhaps he might even be made wretched by thinking that Tom could rival him ;—perhaps ”—

"Sit down, my dear girl; sit down, and call your reason, your religion, to your aid; you have already suffered much, and endured bravely; do not allow a mind which has received the last sigh of her last friend, to be overcome even with the loss of a lover."

"'Tis not the loss of a lover,—'tis the murder of a lover;—'tis the rending that blessing from *his* heart, which was his sole support, his sweet reward;—'tis the destroying his confidence, that distracts me."

"'Tis very terrible, I grant; such things often drive men to dissipation and vice, who else would never have thought of it; but even if that should be the case, you are perfectly innocent."

"That is *not* the case," said Emily, firmly; "Frederick may have left his situation in life; he may have entered the army, and sought in variety a change of torment: but to this hour, if he lives, his heart has been lonely, his conduct upright. He has sought no friend,—he has listened to no adviser; in humble desolation of soul, he has awaited from his God dismissal from the burthen of existence, and employed all his injured faculties and blighted energy in pursuing justice and practising benevolence—I *know* he has."

"In that knowledge there is consolation, my dear Emily; and at any rate, we should remember, that time has now soothed his sorrows, if he lives; and should your fears be realized"—

Emily shook her head; she felt like the mother who exclaims, "*Thou* talk'st to me, who never hadst a child!" But she became aware that her violence had

alarmed Lady Hornby, who was experiencing for her the most painful sympathy; she corrected the emotion of a heart that swelled to bursting; she clasped her dear friend to her bosom, and promised to submit even to this: but nature was too powerful, and, for the first time in her life, she fell into violent hysterics.

A physician was immediately procured, who ordered her to be bled, and prescribed anodynes to prevent fever; and when Sir Joshua and young Hastings arrived to dinner (which was ordered early in order to facilitate their return to Richmond), they found the house in confusion, and Lady Hornby in the utmost distress, which was particularly vexatious, because Sir Joshua's good-natured countenance was dilated with pleasure, and he was anxious to tell his lady how successful he had been in getting recruits for her breakfast, to supply the loss of Edgemount, and the friends whom he had taken to Brighton.

"I cannot talk of breakfasts now. Emily is far more affected than I ever believed her steady, gentle nature was capable of; she believes poor Tracy is dead, and thinks, of course, he held her as"—

"Oh, that is all nonsense; we all know that men have died, and worms have"—

"Sir Joshua, this is no time for jest; read those letters—only read them, and see what she has lost in this excellent young man."

Lady Hornby returned to Emily, and Sir Joshua did read them, and sympathized with them; he traced throughout the noblest sentiments, the purest thoughts,

the most devoted tenderness; and in all that they related of passing events, actions, and expectations, saw that Frederick Tracy was steadily pursuing, but often with great difficulty, the object of his voyage; and that he entertained reasonable hopes of so disposing of his property, as to enable him to discharge his late father's debts, and leave himself something, which, if placed in some respectable connection, might render him a fitting match for Emily. As the letters continued, and complained of her silence, and guessed the various causes which might have produced it, the supposition of her having formed another engagement only produced in him an assurance that he would never cross her path in person through life; but that his friendship was inviolably hers, to be claimed by her, and her children after her,—an assurance that, in professing the constancy of his own attachment, he meant no charge against the mutability of hers, for he remembered her extreme youth, the advantages which personal intercourse bestowed, and the influence of her friends, who, he knew, were adverse to his wishes: all he entreated was, to *know* the extent of his misfortune, that he might with the more diligence seek help from that Power which could alone support him under an affliction so severe and irreparable."

So deeply were the feelings of Lady Hornby excited towards her young friend, that she did not leave her for a moment, till, in consequence of the medicines given to her, poor Emily dropped into a profound sleep, when she repaired to the drawing-room, where she expected

to find the two gentlemen, who had dined together, and of course given up all thoughts of Richmond. Sir Joshua was just folding the last of these long and sorrowful epistles, in the same paper where they had been found, on which was written with a shaking hand, "Poor Emily's letters."

"What have you done with Mr. Thomas, my dear?"

"Tom is, I believe, gone to visit a lady who is in the high road to make him a happy man, by the possession of her own pretty little person, and her pretty large estate in Hampshire; an estate in which, I understand, there is game in abundance, to the great joy of both Sancho and his master."

"You surprise me much—I cannot say please, for my heart is too heavy to be pleased with anything."

"It is a good and dear heart, even in its heaviness; and having beguiled me of many a dull hour, has a right to demand attention in turn. You recollect, my dear, that Tom told us he heard on the coach, that Emily was about to be married to Edgemount, and fearful of occasioning her any uneasiness, he delayed calling upon her till he had ascertained the truth of the report; and thence learned, whether he should or should not renew her early recollections of poor Tracy. It now appears that the intervening time was spent at East-Sheen, to very good purpose, as he gained courage, on the strength of a new coat, and a newly received legacy, to make a declaration of love to a lady whom he has known for several months, but whom he never

could have had the courage to address, but for those inspiring circumstances."

"And have you really seen her?"

"I have; she is a very *petite* figure, with a pretty face, a kind of pocket Venus, who doubtless looks upon the tall athletic form of our young friend as a proper protector to so exquisite a gem, which has remained in virgin brightness to the verge of thirty. She is, I understand, perfectly independent and 'very serious;' but as heavenly love (in ladies) does not exclude earthly love, and Tom, though no saint, is yet no sinner, and a well-disposed, kind-hearted young fellow, and moreover really fond of her, altogether 'tis a very good thing, in my opinion."

"And after calling on her you visited Sancho?"

"No, we next went to Mr. Percy's, who turned out to be a friend of a gentleman who is the friend of Colonel Mortimer, who, by the way, is, as I said, a widower, and did look with an eye of no common interest on Emily. Our visit was, altogether, one of extraordinary character, and will draw a smile even from those 'dove eyes,' or I am much mistaken."





XII.

A Man and a Manor.

WHEN Emily awoke, on the following morning, from the slumber occasioned by her soporific medicine, by slow degrees she began to recollect the sorrows of the preceding day, and her conduct under them, and endeavoured to resolve "that she would submit to the affliction as one permitted by Heaven for the exercise of her virtue;" but the very reasoning upon it brought it again before her mind in all the freshness of its cruelty, and she felt that years might roll over her, and leave it still possessed of force to torture her.

To make every possible inquiry after Tracy, to write letters innumerable, even to go herself a pilgrimage in search of him, appeared the only way in which her active troubled spirit could be appeased, and the first movement to which her wishes pointed was that of searching out her cousin William immediately, inquiring the time when he would return to America, his connections in the West India Islands, and the probability that either himself or her uncle would accompany her thither.

With these thoughts rushing through her unquiet brain Emily sprang from her bed, and to the alarm of her attendant, began to dress ; she was not till then sensible that any person was in the room, for the opiate had destroyed all minor recollections, and compassion for the pale and wearied woman did much in composing her own perturbed state, and though she persisted in dressing, she yet, with her accustomed consideration and humanity, requested the maid to go to bed, saying "that she was now well, and desired to be left alone, as she was going to write." The moment she was left to herself she began to seek earnestly for the letters which her overwhelming sorrow had hitherto prevented her from reading, or effectively listening to ; not finding them she concluded that Lady Hornby had in her kindness taken them away, and her impatience to possess them, to retrace every line which bespoke affection and opened the sluices of sorrow anew, took such possession of her mind that she could not forbear leaving her chamber to endeavour to regain them, and, for the first time in her life, sacrificing another's comfort to her own.

Yet it was by a very gentle tap at Lady Hornby's door that she disturbed the sleepers, and announced her intreaty in a most deprecating tone. She was answered by a fair hand and a smiling face, that looked as if sorrow had never touched it, as it reached forth the fatal parcel which inevitably carried so much to the bosom of her who received it ; and whilst Emily was, in one sense, relieved from the idea of having been the cause of so much suffering to her the day before, she yet

felt, with the more acuteness, that grief arising from the wickedness which had deprived her, most probably for ever, of a friend beyond all others, a friend whom she, beyond all others, wanted, for young as she was, misfortune and death had robbed her on every side; she stood a lonely tree upon a barren heath, shaken by every blast, yet green in her youth, fated to live and to suffer.

Every letter had been devoured by eyes that yet overflowed as they read; and again her busy mind was crossing the Atlantic, when Lady Hornby entered her room, and fixing her eyes on the untasted coffee, which had entered two hours before (Emily knew not how or when), exclaimed violently against the impropriety of thus giving way to useless sorrow, and insisted that she should come into the breakfast room, where Sir Joshua was very anxious to see her.

"I cannot, indeed. I *cannot* go there—"

"Yes, you can, Emily, and you must; it is unworthy of you to give way to sorrow, which afflicts your friends; if you could see how the dear round face of my beloved is elongated on your account, I am sure you would exert yourself. Depend upon it, no one shall intrude upon us save the bridegroom elect, Mr. Thomas Hastings."

"Bridegroom! Lady Hornby, I cannot bear a jest. In pity spare me."

"'Tis no jest, Tom is going to marry a pretty and rich lady, who accepts his fine person and honest loving heart (by the way, sorrow has really improved him most miraculously) in lieu of the goods of fortune; she is very good, and very fond, I believe, which is the new school

you were at school. Well, sir, this Tracy, as honest a fellow as ever drew breath, was ruined by the war, made a bankrupt, and left to shift as he could. Some years after he became co-heir to an estate in the West Indies, but died ere he took possession, leaving an only son, then scarcely twelve years of age; this is the young fellow I speak of, my nonpareil, Frederick Tracy.’”

Emily clasped her hands for a moment in grateful adoration, then flung them around Lady Hornby, and wept long and freely, and, despite of her real happiness and affected *nonchalance*, her tears dropt also.

“How strange it is,” said Sir Joshua, “that at this part of my friend’s narrative I should interrupt him by a question Emily does not ask, such is the confidence, such the delicacy of woman! Go on, my dear, if you can; if not, I will do it.”

“No; I will play old Percy myself, brown Bob, and all,” cried she, recovering her wonted *naïveté*. “Well, sir, what does this young fellow do, in his twentieth year, but go over to his estates, take cognizance of all things, and with equal industry and humanity set himself to make the most of his property, for the express purpose of paying his deceased parent’s debts; but he did not do things slap-dash, in a mere fit of enthusiasm, for with him money had its full value, and for some time he divided every sum he took, appropriating two-thirds to this purpose and one to forming future provision for a family; but on this point, as I just now told you, his hopes were blasted, after which, reckless of fortune, save as it fulfilled the noble purpose to which it

was devoted, all went to that stock, and he remitted, by every means, payment of the full debt, and, where the creditors chose it, interest to the time. I was amongst the number, and refused mine, of course, which circumstance led to our personal acquaintance. During this time he was so dejected, and in such poor health, that his friends trembled for his life, and a voyage to England was alike recommended to his cousin and himself. She took it, but uselessly, he persisted in refusing; but about four months since, learning that his betrothed had fallen into great distress from the insolvency of her guardian, he set out immediately for England, leaving the little he had left himself to be collected by his uncle, who is coming to settle in his own country; and so, Sir Joshua, *here he is*, seeking in vain for this lost girl, whom he will probably, *too* probably, find in a situation to which death would be preferable; beauty and poverty are ever in danger.’”

Lady Hornby ceased to speak; in fact, the heart of this lively woman was engaged in thanking Heaven for the protection the lovely orphan had experienced, that of Emily was too full of deep, unutterable thankfulness, to speak for many minutes. At last she said, turning to Sir Joshua,—

“But did you really see Frederick Tracy?”

“I did, my dear girl;—I was with him a whole hour. I should have brought him home with me, if I had not believed you to be at Richmond; besides, he was not in a situation to bring out, nor did I promise that he should see you till we got to Richmond. In fact, I

scarcely know what I said, but I believe it was pretty satisfactory. In short, you are a very worthy, but a very *poor* couple ; and I think it would be better for you not to meet at all. I am a great enemy to imprudent marriages ;—I am, indeed ; so don't look so saucily."

"Imprudent!" cried Lady Hornby, "why poor Tom declares he will share his fortune with Emily, and it now consists of almost three hundred and twenty pounds, in earnest of which he hath given me one."

"Dear cousin Tom! how I rejoice in his good fortune!"

"I daresay you do, my dear ; but go to your own room ; be careful of the bandage on your arm, and remember the carriage will be here within an hour, which will take you to Richmond, and—"

How that hour was spent by a mind informed like Emily's, we need not say ; for though pale and feeble from the extraordinary events of these memorable days, she wore a countenance of such serene happiness as to render her truly anxious friends easy, and save them the trouble of inventing something to tranquillize the extraordinary excitement of her mind. The drive was a restorative of the happiest description, though it was passed nearly in silence ; for the mild glistening eyes of Emily, as she inwardly reviewed the change which had taken place in her feelings since she passed the same objects, showed that she was still ascending in spirit and pouring out her soul in thanks to Heaven.

"I hope," said Lady Hornby, as she alighted, "not a single creature will come near us to-day ; we all require rest and composure."

"There has been a strange gentleman here five times," said her own maid, who was waiting ; but he left no card, and said he would come again."

"Indeed ! what was he like, Smithson ?"

"Oh, my lady, he was a very grand looking person to my mind, very thin, and quite pale to be sure ; but then he walked like a Spaniard, and had such fine black eyes—I never saw such eyes !—and then for teeth ! I may say, that, barring your own, my lady,—but, bless my life, he's here again !"

Emily heard this, and sunk back insensible, as Sir Joshua thought, on the seat of the carriage, but he was mistaken ; for Emily heard a voice near her which, in its well-remembered accents, soothed and revived her heart ; and when at last she dared to look in his face, and believe that all was not a dream, she perceived those dark mild eyes, whose colour and expression had rested on her memory more strongly than any other lineament, fixed upon her with an expression of such joy and tenderness, such a renewal of early feelings and pleasures, she almost felt as if her mother must be standing near them. Another glance showed a great change : his face was marked and manly ; the traces of care and sorrow were there in despite of the sunshine of present joy ; yet, on the whole, his person was strikingly improved, and singularly graceful.

The heart alone can imagine this meeting,—can conceive its sparkling delight, followed by deep-seated joy, and the serenity of confidence and peace.

There was, however, so much of sorrow to retrace,

and so much of anxiety for the future, as still to dash the cup of joy with a portion of anxiety, which, on Frederick's part, was much more acute than Emily's; for she had been in such extreme indigence, that she thought all less degrees of misery comparatively light; but Frederick, seeing the elegance which surrounded her, and which she graced, felt that he could not reduce her to the bare competence of a scanty provision,—every hour, however, served to prove that their happiness was bound up in each other;—the taste, the pursuits, as well as the sensibilities, and the principles of early life, were unfolded with every interview, and they had the rare felicity of being at once delighted with the acquisitions and novelty of each other's attainments, and with the sense of reposing on the known faith and tried attachment of an ancient and inviolable friendship;—and although it appeared that nature had given somewhat more constancy, in a case of hopeless attachment, to the stronger sex, Frederick saw only in the ingenuous confession of his Emily, a new point of conduct to approve, a new sorrow to pity, and a new subject of gratitude to Heaven in preserving her for him.

A very few days sufficed to prove to our young couple their means of being happy with humble comforts; for on William Hastings presenting himself, he was the bearer of one-half of the property Emily had lost, together with a long letter from her uncle, pointing out the means by which he hoped, in the course of time, to repay the remainder. As he could have no idea that

by a partial repayment they had been actually bereft of subsistence, and knew the activity of his eldest son, whilst he lamented their altered situation, he yet had formed no conception of the distress of his family, and he warmly expressed his thanks to Emily, for the part she was acting, when he heard from his wife, as a wise and just guardian to his brother's children. He spoke highly of William's wife, whose care had restored his health, which was much affected by his late trials, and concluded by expressing an earnest desire of being restored to Mrs. Hastings and his sons, speaking of poor Tom, as of a subject that lay heavy at his heart.

Alas ! how much had he to learn and to lament

From this time Emily's mind was perfectly at ease : it had been the dread of her heart that Mr. Percy, the good baronet, and Colonel Mortimer, would in their kindness advance Frederick money to begin business on some extensive plan, whereby he might be involved eventually in the troubles of which she had seen so much ; or, escaping these, would be inevitably drawn from those quiet enjoyments which are best attained in rural life. She knew his taste for literary pursuits, and the elegant occupations which belong to intellectual cultivation ; and looking back to their first days as their best, she naturally sought to renew these ; and justly felt, that young as they were they had yet both suffered so much as to have a right to the enjoyment of rest from the turmoil, and leisure for the duties of life. Frederick thought and wished precisely the same, and the generosity of his own heart taught him to re-

ceive from her little store what they alike needed without difficulty ; but yet, as his uncle was daily expected, he looked impatiently to the time which would enable him to give as freely as he could receive.

Whilst these important discussions took place in the lanes of Petersham, or the high woodlands of the Park, those lonely solitudes, which seem spread by the hand of nature for the rambles of lovers and poets, Lady Hornby was exerting all her well-known powers to provide a fête worthy of her own celebrity ; and as there were some hours when she could command the fine talents and the unwearied activity of Emily, it was no wonder that between them the entertainment was alike charming and unique.

As Emily could not be made a queen of diamonds, her ladyship was satisfied with making her elegantly simple in her dress, and so much had the last eight days heightened her beauty, that even Frederick gazed upon her with new admiration, as if he then first discovered that her personal attractions helped to rivet the heart so long in her possession, that he had forgot how it came there. All was brilliance, gaiety, and pleasure ; the dance and the song succeeded each other ; the odour of the flowers and trees, the fresh breeze from the river tempering the heat, the soft shadows that seemed to play with the flickering light upon the green carpet of nature, the crowds of gay young females splendidly attired, gave to the whole scene an air of enchanting, yet refined hilarity, which gladdened every heart, and shone in every eye ; but, most of all, in that of her who

was the queen of the scene, the courteous and hospitable mistress of the revels.

"I never saw Lady Hornby look so well as she does to-day," observed Mr. Tracy to Sir Joshua.

"Nor I," returned the baronet, "which is much more to say ; she does look charmingly just now, as she presents her children to our invaluable neighbour, the Duchess of — : look, with what a smile she receives them—the smile of an *angel*, for it is independent of earthly attraction."

"I remember Macneil called her so, long since ; it struck me when I was a boy, and I rejoice that I have seen her. I can enter into the feeling which at this moment irradiates Lady Hornby's features."

"Yet you will enter into it more to-morrow," said Sir Joshua, as with a quick step he joined his lady, and attended her grace to her carriage.

As the sun went down (but not till then) did the gay guests depart ; and so completely was their elegant hostess worn out by the fatigues of the day, that when she had made her last curtsey, she retired also, leaving to Emily the task of entertaining the two gentlemen, and giving thus a lesson on the subject which might be of future use to one entering upon a new situation in life.

Emily rose early the next morning, and took a solitary ramble over those walks which now exhibited the melancholy litter, which followed in consequence of their past gaiety, and served to heighten the regret she felt at leaving a place which had witnessed the most pleasureable moments of her existence, and been at least

unstained by those which she unjustly considered her severest sorrows. Whilst she thus moralized, Colonel Mortimer joined her, and on her inquiring for Frederick, told her that his father-in-law, Mr. Tracy, had arrived, and was then in Richmond ; he had just left him at the Talbot, conceiving, that after a day of so much fatigue, a stranger's visit might be unseasonable.

"I hope," said Emily, "Frederick is gone down to him, as I have not seen him this morning."

"I hope so, too, for the old man is impatient to see him ; he has now only him on whom to lean. You will pardon me, Miss Shelburne, if I seek to interest *you* for the father of a sweet and excellent young woman (whom, in fact, you much resemble), and for the uncle of your affianced—"

As Colonel Mortimer spoke, he put his handkerchief to his eyes, and seemed too much affected to proceed ; but there was no need to plead with Emily for indulgence and pity for the peculiarities, or infirmities, of an aged and bereaved man : but ere she had time to say what she felt on the subject, she was summoned to breakfast ; and leaving the colonel to recover, she entered the house, and was hastily presented in all her best looks, and under the glow of her best feelings, to the elder Mr. Tracy.

On recovering from this surprise, Emily took her seat at the breakfast table, and perceived with surprise, not unmingled with pain, that Lady Hornby was dressed completely in mourning,—not new, but evidently used for its general purpose, as if hastily required.

"I am sorry," said she, in a low voice, "to see your ladyship in mourning."

"It is not mourning ; it is only black—the symbol of sincere respect, but by no means of sorrow."

"A very good distinction, my lady," said the stranger, who was even now a man whose strongly marked countenance indicated acute observation and deep reflection—the power to struggle against sorrow, as well as the sensibility to feel it.

"I heard, yesterday," resumed Lady Hornby, "of the death of a gentleman who was one of my country neighbours ; a quiet, inoffensive well-meaning man, whose delicate constitution rendered him ever valetudinarian, and of late years much a sufferer, so that I consider his release a blessing. He has left me a beautiful cabinet, of which he knew I was fond, and a legacy of five hundred pounds, as a reward for some slight services."

"I am very glad of it ; it proves that he had a grateful heart ; and if he had no relations, I wish he had made it more," said Mr. Tracy.

"But he had a relation whom he never saw, but to whom—except a few other legacies to his old servants—he has left his estate and considerable accumulations. He possessed it, I have understood, from the forbearance of her father, who was the natural heir, and might have been the possessor ; and so much did this circumstance affect his mind, that he forbore to marry all his life, though a man who really wanted domestic comfort, from a sense of duty ; a belief that he ought in con-

science to restore it to his brother's daughter.—Emily, I speak of your uncle—”

“And I,” said Sir Joshua, rising, “claim my right, as nearest neighbour, to salute the Lady of Stanton-dale manor.”

The brotherly kiss of the baronet, the exclamation of surprise from the stranger, and the colonel, who had just entered, for a moment overwhelmed Emily with confusion ; but in the next, turning her blushing face to Frederick, she put both her hands into his, and exclaimed,—

“Now ! *now* ! Frederick, we *shall* live in the country.” Then suddenly recollecting how many eyes were upon her, she sought to withdraw her hands and fly from sight ; but she only reached the outstretched arms of Lady Hornby, who was about to joke with her, when Mr. Tracy, taking the arm of Colonel Mortimer, yet averting his eyes from his face, thus addressed her in a faltering voice,—

“Young lady—Emily—my child—I thank you ; you have honoured my nephew by this innocent and generous declaration, and yourself no less ; and as you have no father of your own, I pray you to accept of me for one in taking care of this property for *you* and *yours* : for I will venture, before this good company, to assure you that Frederick Tracy has abundance of his own.”

Emily turned with grateful, glistening eyes to the speaker, and, as well as she was able, thanked him for his offer ; but, as both he and Colonel Mortimer looked a little moved by a scene which probably re-

called painful circumstances to their memory, Lady Hornby sought to relieve them by one of her sprightly sallies ; and calling Frederick Tracy, she desired he would take Emily's hand, repeat four lines of play poetry, and make his best bow, adding,—

“It is certain, Emily, your history is very like a modern comedy, dull in the beginning, sorrowful in progress, and crammed full of fine incidents in the last scene, which come in like a cluster of strawberries to sweeten sour critics.”

“Say, rather, my dear, it is like a modern story,” observed Sir Joshua ; “for though you may justly make Emily a heroine, I fear she has few talents for an actress. If we could trace the misfortunes, situations, and feelings of those around us, I believe we should find circumstances more extraordinary than fiction can invent, and sorrow more acute than she can portray ; and in many instances, I trust, we should see the virtuous thus meet the reward of their well-doing, in a”—

“Don't say *marriage* ; Emily can't be married yet—she must go down to Santon-dale—she must wear mourning a month—she must resign her trust in a regular way ; I am all regularity, you know—nobody can esteem integrity so much as *I* do, because”—

“Dear Lady Hornby,” said Emily, hastily, “be assured that I am well aware I have many duties to perform, some of which are so pleasing, that I must be permitted to enjoy them even before I go to Stanton-dale. I have friends in Yorkshire whom I must see

and *thank*; friends in Westminster whom I must reward. I must raise a memorial to the saint I revere; and a monument to him whom I gratefully thank. Oh! I have much to do, but Frederick will assist me; he knows the full value of performing a promise made to one's own heart, and is well aware that the pleasure of being grateful is as dear to the soul as the sense of being just."





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